923.273
D736w

Willis, Henry P.
Stephen A. Douglas

923.273
D736w

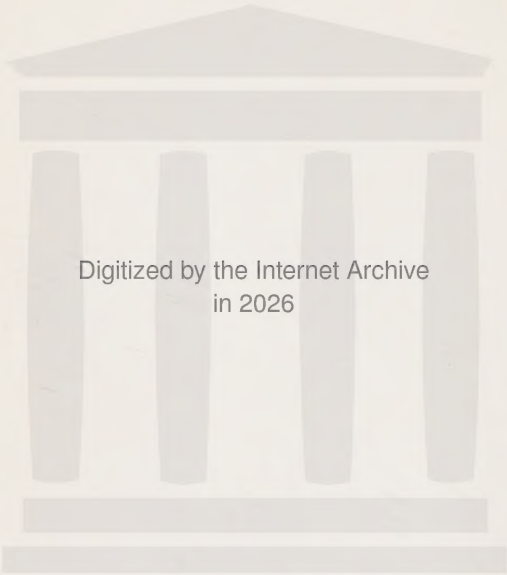
Willis, Henry P.
Stephen A. Douglas

c.1

DATE	ISSUED TO
MAY 17	152
SEP 20	479
	Σ 3609

COLLEGE OF THE SEQUOIAS
LIBRARY

DISCARDED


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/stephenadouglas0000henr

AMERICAN CRISIS BIOGRAPHIES

Edited by

Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, Ph. D.

9943

The American Crisis Biographies

Edited by Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, Ph.D. With the counsel and advice of Professor John B. McMaster, of the University of Pennsylvania.

Each 12mo, cloth, with frontispiece portrait. Price $1.25 net; by mail, $1.37.

These biographies will constitute a complete and comprehensive history of the great American sectional struggle in the form of readable and authoritative biography. The editor has enlisted the co-operation of many competent writers, as will be noted from the list given below. An interesting feature of the undertaking is that the series is to be impartial, Southern writers having been assigned to Southern subjects and Northern writers to Northern subjects, but all will belong to the younger generation of writers, thus assuring freedom from any suspicion of war-time prejudice. The Civil War will not be treated as a rebellion, but as the great event in the history of our nation, which, after forty years, it is now clearly recognized to have been.

Now ready:

Abraham Lincoln. By ELLIS PAXSON OBERHOLTZER.
Thomas H. Benton. By JOSEPH M. ROGERS.
David G. Farragut. By JOHN R. SPEARS.
William T. Sherman. By EDWARD ROBINS.
Frederick Douglass. By BOOKER T. WASHINGTON.
Judah P. Benjamin. By PIERCE BUTLER.
Robert E. Lee. By PHILIP ALEXANDER BRUCE.
Jefferson Davis. By PROF. W. E. DODD.
Alexander H. Stephens. By LOUIS PENDLETON.
John C. Calhoun. By GAILLARD HUNT.
"Stonewall" Jackson. By HENRY ALEXANDER WHITE.
John Brown. By W. E. BURGHARDT DUBOIS.
Charles Sumner. By PROF. GEORGE H. HAYNES.
Henry Clay. By THOMAS H. CLAY.
William H. Seward. By EDWARD EVERETT HALE, Jr.
Stephen A. Douglas. By PROF. HENRY PARKER WILLIS.

In preparation:

Daniel Webster. By PROF. FREDERIC A. OGG.
William Lloyd Garrison. By LINDSAY SWIFT.
Thaddeus Stevens. By PROF. J. A. WOODBURN.
Andrew Johnson. By PROF. WALTER L. FLEMING.
Ulysses S. Grant. By PROF. FRANKLIN S. EDMONDS.
Edwin M. Stanton. By EDWARD S. CORWIN.
Robert Toombs. By PROF. U. B. PHILLIPS.
Jay Cooke. By ELLIS PAXSON OBERHOLTZER.

S. A. Douglas

Department of Public Instruction
TULARE COUNTY
STATE OF CALIFORNIA.
VISALIA
High School Library.

AMERICAN CRISIS BIOGRAPHIES

STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS

by

HENRY PARKER WILLIS, Ph.D.

303

PHILADELPHIA
GEORGE W. JACOBS & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

COLLEGE OF THE SEQUOIAS
LIBRARY

COPYRIGHT, 1910, BY
GEORGE W. JACOBS & COMPANY
Published December, 1910

All rights reserved
Printed in U. S. A.

To my Mother

PREFACE

THE interest in the Civil War, so long superior to that excited by any other period in American history, has for some time past evidently been superseded by a closer attention to the more or less immediate causes which contributed to bring on the struggle. This is the natural sequence of the passage of years and the sinking of the contest itself and of its heroic figures in the larger movement of which it was merely the result. The most significant epoch in American history is not that of the war itself but of the fifteen years preceding. In spite, therefore, of the care with which the ground has already been covered, there will be continued a vivid interest not merely in matter, even of the slightest, which will contribute to the knowledge of American conditions during those troubled years, but also in such critical discussions as may throw the events and personalities of the times into clearer relief, though the gain from any given effort be trifling.

It is for this reason, probably, that the past few years have witnessed the repeated rewriting of the history of the ante-bellum period and of the biographies of those who were then influential in shaping the nation's future. The hold of Lincoln, Sumner, Seward, Davis, and many others, upon the

imagination as well as upon the sober thought of students has grown rather than been weakened by continuous and valuable contributions to their history.

Stephen Arnold Douglas fills a unique place in the years before the Civil War and in his case also the lapse of time has but intensified the interest of students of American history in his bold career. The scholarly work of Allen Johnson and the vivid personal recollections of Clark E. Carr have very recently presented not only the detailed history but the salient qualities of the man. In writing the following pages, the effort has been made to view Douglas primarily as a figure in national politics rather than as one of the chief actors in the slavery struggle. Picturesque and striking, his life possesses its own peculiar appeal apart from that of the causes and movements in which it formed but a strand.

Very sincere thanks are due to Mr. Charles Francis Adams of Boston, who has examined the proof of the volume and has offered valuable suggestions; and general acknowledgment is made to others who have aided at various stages of the author's work.

HENRY PARKER WILLIS.

CONTENTS

	Chronology	9
I.	Humble Beginnings	11
II.	State Politics	30
III.	The Mormons in Illinois	53
IV.	Congressional Apprenticeship	70
V.	War and Slavery	91
VI.	The Illinois Central Railroad	108
VII.	On the Senate Threshold	128
VIII.	North and South	148
IX.	"American" Foreign Policy	166
X.	The Kansas–Nebraska Struggle	187
XI.	Shifting Party Lines	208
XII.	The Admission of Kansas	225
XIII.	The Joint Debates	265
XIV.	Breaking with the South	291
XV.	The Last Battle	309
XVI.	Without a Party	333
	Bibliography	354
	Bibliographical Notes	356
	Index	360

CHRONOLOGY

1813—April 23d. Birth of Stephen Arnold Douglas.

1814—Death of Douglas's father.

1828–1832—Studies and apprenticeship.

1833—April. Departure for the West.

1833—November. Arrival in Illinois.

1834—March. Admitted to the bar.

1835—February 10th. Elected district attorney.

1836—Elected to the legislature.

1837—Resigns from the legislature.

1837—Appointed Register of the Land Office in Springfield.

1837—December. Resigns as Register to become a candidate for Congress.

1838—Is defeated for Congress.

1838–1840—Lawyer and politician.

1840—November 30th. Named Secretary of State of Illinois.

1841—February. Becomes Justice of the Supreme Court of Illinois.

1841—Renders decision favorable to the Mormons.

1843—Resigns from Supreme Court and makes successful contest for congressional election.

1844—Speaks in favor of the Jackson bill.

1844—August. Interview with General Jackson.

1844—November. Reëlected to Congress.

1845—First discussion of slavery.

1846–1847—Adopts Polk's Mexican War policies.

1847—Elected to the United States Senate.

1850—Aids in passing the Compromise measures of 1850.

1852—Advocates "American" foreign policy.

1852—First real contest for the presidency. Defeated by Franklin Pierce.

1853—Visits Europe.

1854—Secures passage of Kansas–Nebraska Act.

1856—Second candidacy for the presidency. Defeated by Buchanan.

1857—Sides with Republicans in Kansas question.

1858—Debates slavery question with Lincoln. Is reëlected to Senate against Lincoln.

1860—Third candidacy for the presidency. Nominated by one section of the Democrats and defeated by Lincoln at the polls.

1860—March. Seeks to prevent war. Draws close to Lincoln.

1860—June. Dies at Chicago.

736 w

STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS

CHAPTER I

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

"TELL them to obey the laws and support the Constitution of the United States."[1] This message, supposedly containing the last words of Stephen Arnold Douglas, transmitted to his boys "Robbie" and "Stevie," then four and two years old respectively, furnishes a key to the singular character of the rival of Abraham Lincoln. It is not necessary to inquire too narrowly into the question whether any man's "last words" were exactly what fell from his lips at the supreme moment; they are usually those which are given to him by interpreters prone to accept the spirit for the word. The Constitution and laws of the United States, obedience to which was thus solemnly enjoined upon his infant children had, at the hands of the speaker, perhaps suffered sufficient modification to warrant him in urging a recognition of them. At all events, the anxious attention to "constitutional"

[1] These words are quoted by all of Douglas's biographers without definite statement as to their authority.

...tment of Pu... 303

questions, which thus made itself apparent even on a death-bed, furnishes a parallel to many singular incidents in a career curiously misunderstood and as curiously misrepresented.

Douglas's early beginnings were by him concealed behind a cloud of reticence.[1] Congressional leaders, not noted for their personal modesty, have in many instances abstained from vaunting the circumstances of their origin or exposing them to the public eye, either because of ignorance, or of disregard for descent, or of recognition that in a democracy too much attention to ancestral detail is unpopular. Douglas, at any rate, was never a family historian. It is from sources other than his own writings that the details of his genealogy must be compiled. His earliest known forbears were Scotch, settling at New London, Conn., probably about 1645.

[1] There is no substantial controversy about the early history of the Douglas family. The clearest account of its origin so far as relates to Stephen Arnold Douglas is found in Sheahan's *Life of Stephen A. Douglas* (New York, 1860), which was produced as an incident to the campaign of 1860 and undoubtedly presents authentic information approved by Douglas regarding his early history. Johnson in his *Stephen A. Douglas* embodies most of the material given by Sheahan and adds a few touches obtained from a manuscript biography of Douglas in the possession of the Douglas family. A few additional points are supplied in the Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society and some minor items of information can be gleaned from contemporary newspapers. Flint's *Stephen A. Douglas* adds almost nothing to the matter contained in the other works already referred to, and the same is true of Gardner's *Life of Douglas* and the biography by William Garrott Brown. Clark E. Carr's *Stephen A. Douglas* gives a brief sketch of Mr. Douglas's early life, which is of special interest because of the personal reminiscences and impressions.

The family, though often represented as of distinctly New England stock, did not long remain exclusively so. It extended itself not only over New England but throughout Virginia, the Carolinas, and other Southern states. About 1750 Douglas's grandfather had established himself in New York and there married Martha Arnold. A son, Stephen A. Douglas, was born at Stephentown, Rensselaer County, New York, but he spent no more than his boyhood in that state. Having been educated as a physician, graduating first from Middlebury College, he married Sarah Fisk and, after the birth of two children, the first a daughter, the second, Stephen Arnold Douglas, the subject of this biography, he died of heart disease. His sudden death occurred but a little while after the birth of the son at Brandon, Vt., on April 23, 1813.

The elder Douglas, though holding out promise of successful and useful work in his profession, had done little more than to care for the immediate demands of existence, and it was not long before the mother with her children was transferred to the farm which she and an elder brother had jointly inherited. The farm, later referred to by Sheahan, Douglas's Boswell, as a "patrimonial estate," was not more than the simple New England homestead of the early nineteenth century. Douglas himself knew the meaning of manual labor, working until he was fifteen years old during the long summer seasons and getting a scant education at the district

school during the winter. Yet the tradition of mental training had been strong in the Douglas blood, and it was a keen disappointment when at fifteen years an application for some arrangement whereby he would be prepared for, and sent to, college was met with a refusal. The uncle, upon whom Douglas had, in fact, depended, felt himself embarrassed by the presence of a young wife and of an infant son less than a year old, at the time when his nephew sought to make this severe though warrantable draft upon the narrow means of the family. The tenor of the conversation can be imagined from Sheahan's delicate description. "An affectionate remonstrance against the folly of abandoning the farm for the uncertainties of a professional life, accompanied by a gentle intimation that he had a family of his own to support, and therefore did not feel able to bear the expense of educating another person's children, was the response made to the boy's request." [1]

It was partly pique based upon a belief that he had been cheated through the violation of a supposed understanding that he was to be given a collegiate education, and partly the reaction of this feeling upon a rugged and independent nature, that made Douglas on the same day walk fourteen miles to Middlebury, Vt., where was situated the college at which his father had been educated, and there take service as a cabinet-maker's apprentice. He continued at this work for more than two years.

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 4.

Enough had then been earned to warrant Douglas, now seventeen years of age, in entering the academy at Brandon, Vt. Twelve months in the institution gave him a preliminary acquaintance with classical studies, and at the end of his year's schooling, a new opportunity was opened to him by the nearly simultaneous marriage of his sister, now in her twentieth year, and of his mother, still a young woman, the first becoming the wife of Julius N. Granger of Ontario County, N. Y., while the latter married Gehazi Granger, father of her daughter's husband. An invitation to Stephen to make his home for the time with the rearranged family, resulted in his entering the academy at Canandaigua, N. Y., not far away. Some further progress was made by Douglas in his classical studies, but he was already beginning to drift away from scholastic and literary pursuits. Admiring biographers have noted the development of a taste for "political controversy" even during Douglas's early years, an observation for which there seems no authentic support. The bitter discussions centering about the second election of President Jackson in 1832 could hardly have failed to arrest the attention of a pugnacious and positive nature. In debating clubs and local meetings, Douglas appeared as an enthusiastic Jackson advocate and assumed a recognized position as an exponent of national policies in the school in which he was then enrolled.

Until this time, Douglas had had no marked object in his course of self-cultivation. The classical

studies to which he had addressed himself were the natural and proper introduction to a professional training in a period when it was thought not expedient to decry general culture in the interest of special money-making education. Yet even in his first application to his uncle for the aid which would render him independent during the necessary years of collegiate life, Douglas had specified a professional training as his ultimate object. It is probable that this training would have been that of his father who, however, died too early to have left his son with more than a transient predilection for his own profession. Douglas now found himself much more attracted to the law than to medicine, since the former held out far greater rewards as well as opportunities for political promotion. Four more years, however, would be necessary to gain admission to the bar. The young man had already done something by getting a preliminary acquaintance with a few fundamentals in the service of attorneys established in Brandon, but the prospect of a full admission to the profession seemed remote, particularly as he had not yet completed his academic training.

In June, 1833, Douglas finally took a step which he had contemplated for some months. He started for the West, with no definite post in view and with but a small sum of money, believing with foundation that the opportunities in a growing country would be broader and the restrictions upon his progress less severe than in the older states of the Atlantic

seaboard. An attack of bilious fever overtook him at Cleveland, O., where he had secured an association of an advantageous character with Sherlock J. Andrews, a practicing lawyer. He had not reached Cleveland with any settled intention of remaining there, but letters of introduction and personal friends in the city had succeeded in securing him an unexpectedly favorable opening. The sharp attack, probably due to conditions developed by a comparatively frail constitution on the somewhat trying journey, so much reduced a vitality already low as to compel Douglas's physicians to advise against his remaining longer in Cleveland. Douglas, however, was unwilling to return to New York, and during October, 1833, he went by canal boat to Portsmouth on the Ohio River and then by steamer to Cincinnati, where a week's search for work left him with little money and no prospects. A further journey to Louisville and then to St. Louis by steamer, in the course of which the vessel was detained a week, owing to an accident to her machinery, gained him several traveling acquaintances, but brought him nothing more than friendly and kind advice, with an offer from Edward Bates of St. Louis, an eminent local lawyer, of the use of his office and library without charge until he could establish a practice. The expenses of living in St. Louis were comparatively high and the very few dollars then in possession of Douglas evidently would not warrant his awaiting the turn of fortune in a large city. He thought, therefore, of securing an appointment to

teach—the occupation then as now considered almost the only one for which no previous experience is necessary. Douglas had always been a close and an interested reader of books of travel and description. It was this, in part, that had drawn him from the more settled portions of the Union. He recalled a description of Illinois in the neighborhood of Jacksonville and, imagining the conditions there to be favorable, in default of any better plan, he spent the whole remainder of his money in reaching that place. The journey was made by steamboat up the Illinois River, with a short run by stage-coach from the landing to Jacksonville, then a mere frontier settlement with a huddle of cabins around the usual country inn.

Jacksonville, in fact, was not a place of any commanding importance even for a state as little developed as Illinois. At that time the state was chiefly settled in the lower or southern half of its territory, the capital being Vandalia. The inhabitants in 1836–1837 included 267,000 whites, with about 2,200 free negroes and 488 negroes registered as apprentices, making a total population of nearly 270,000 souls. There was the usual system of government, with a Supreme Court having four members holding offices during good behavior, and also circuit courts created by the legislature. A peculiarly strong position was occupied by the Supreme Court, inasmuch as it was created by the constitution, while its members, jointly with the governor, constituted a council, a majority of whose

members could approve or veto all acts of legislation. Essentially the state was in an important transition period. It was facing the question of internal development, while politically its problems were as difficult and as evasive as those of its industrial upbuilding. President Jackson had carried the state in 1832 and since then Democratic votes were in the large majority.

To a frontier community thus constituted and agitated by the local application of broad national policies, Douglas had now come. Though he had been a Jacksonian in his Eastern home, it had been some little time since he had concerned himself actively with political questions, while to the local contests of Illinois he was of course an absolute stranger. Moreover, when he descended from the stage at Jacksonville, Douglas was practically penniless. By selling a few school-books which he had with him, he secured the temporary means of support, but Jacksonville held out no encouragement and a walk from that place to Winchester apparently did not bring him any nearer to employment. His journey to Winchester had occupied the early part of December, for he had been compelled to take it slowly. Not only the low state of his funds but also the lack of transportation, made it impossible for him to arrive sooner. More than a week was required in making the trip. On reaching Winchester, it was imperative for Douglas to secure work immediately. He had not been able to bring with him the little baggage which he retained

and therefore could not even resort to the expedient of selling or pawning it. This uncomfortable situation was relieved by the sudden acquisition of six dollars earned by acting as clerk to the administrator of an estate whose chattels were put up at auction on the very day of Douglas's arrival. An offer of two dollars per day was gratefully accepted and during the intervals of the sale, which lasted three days, Douglas had several opportunities of defending in conversation the Jacksonian policies then under discussion in the state. He seized the occasion to make it known that he was desirous of teaching school and chance acquaintances who had been favorably impressed with his acumen, succeeded in organizing a school, partly for the benefit of the young stranger and partly for that of their children. Forty pupils, each paying three dollars per quarter, were soon found, and on the first Monday in December, 1833, he began work in an improvised schoolroom, continuing in this service barely for the length of time for which he had engaged himself. The three months were well occupied. Teaching did not prove a heavy drain upon his time and he was able to continue a little reading of the law, using borrowed books and occasionally earning a small fee before justices of the peace who required no license on the part of those practicing before them. General Murray McConnell had lent Douglas a few books during the short time that he spent at Jacksonville and had encouraged him to make application for an attorney's license.

The little reading which Douglas had been able to accomplish and the good-will of his newly made acquaintances, brought him the desired recognition, and on the 4th of March, 1834, being then still less than twenty-one years old, he was admitted to the bar by the judges of the Supreme Court.

According to the testimony of acquaintances of the time, Douglas was even younger in appearance than he was in years. S. S. Brooks, then editor of the Jacksonville *News*, has given his impression of the young man who came to Jacksonville at the opening of March for the purpose of securing his license. Douglas, says Mr. Brooks, was "a youth apparently not exceeding seventeen or eighteen years of age . . . beardless and remarkably youthful in appearance." Nevertheless Mr. Brooks, himself not perhaps a very critical judge, was surprised at the development of his acquaintance's intellect and his "comprehensive knowledge of the political history of the country." Brooks says nothing about the scope of his legal training, but it is evident that he was better versed in politics than in law, and that his political wisdom was far more evident to those who agreed with him than to his opponents. Nevertheless, Douglas had now taken the first and necessary step to which he had for four years looked forward, more or less vaguely at first, and later with a growing positiveness and determination. He might not know much law, but he was a recognized lawyer, had made acquaintances, had accepted a definite political allegiance,

and was in position to make capital of his native ability and his connections. He hastened to open an office in Jacksonville.

There was, however, comparatively little business in the town which he had selected as his present home. Still, if there was little law, there was much politics, and Douglas turned to the latter field as a means of livelihood. He had already sought to get a foothold with the press, writing a commendatory letter to S. S. Brooks, who had just organized the Jacksonville *News* and had begun its publication in February, 1834. Brooks had appreciated this early commendation and encouragement, and as soon as Douglas had fairly settled himself in Jacksonville, the *News* repaid his support and approval by more or less tactful advertising. It was largely to the interest of the newspaper to secure a better organization of the Democratic party, thereby building up a definite body of subscribers. Douglas could aid in this process and in return the paper stood ready to help him into office. The new-fledged attorney began not only energetic but systematic work designed to put himself forward as a local leader. One of his most sympathetic biographers admits that there was no time even at this early stage of his career "when the arts of the politician were not instinctive in him."[1] He entered politics distinctly as a means of livelihood and of self-advancement, wholly without "boyish illusions to outlive regarding the nature and conditions of public life." He

[1] Johnson, *Life of Douglas*, p. 19.

naturally attached himself more and more to the strong, dominating figure of Andrew Jackson, then overshadowing every other upon the national stage, bent upon holding the whole applause and rewarding with a more or less generous hand the Hessians who supported his policies.

Douglas found an early opportunity for making himself known. The Whigs, Jackson's opponents, were apparently gaining ground, partly owing to local dissatisfaction with Jackson's attitude toward the Second Bank of the United States. In order to offset their efforts, "it was deemed by Mr. Douglas and the editor of the *News* expedient to call a mass meeting of the Democrats of the county to test the question whether General Jackson was to be entirely abandoned or heartily supported."[1] The call had been made at a well-chosen moment and a large and an interested audience filled the court-house and overflowed into the square. The usual resolutions, common at political conventions, had been prepared in advance, and partly as a result of the prominence which Douglas had acquired in the preliminary arrangements, partly because of the desire of his supporters to push him into a commanding position, partly because of uncertainty and doubt about the resolutions and a desire to unload their responsibility should such a course be necessary, Douglas was put forward as their advocate.

According to Sheahan, when the meeting had been organized, Douglas "boldly advanced" and

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 18.

read the resolutions, strongly endorsing the policy of the President in refusing to recharter the Second Bank of the United States and removing the public deposits from the institution. The reading of the resolutions was the signal for a bitter debate, vividly described by Douglas's personal admirer and follower in his usual florid manner. A local lawyer, one Josiah Lamborn, spoke in opposition to the resolutions, personally attacking their inexperienced advocate and flatly contradicting one of his statements. This led to a reply by Douglas, admitted to have been "in his own peculiar style"—a style later immortalized by John Quincy Adams and others, and characterized by rather extreme and unbridled personal attack. The speech, however, had not been pitched too low. His opponent left the room, whether, as intimated by Douglas's biographer, because of the "irresistible" effect of the discourse, or because he was not willing to answer in the same vein, is not certain. The rough farmers, "hardy pioneers," and local grocery-store statesmen, were delighted with the words of Douglas, bestowing upon him what Sheahan has called "most expressive complimentary titles," such as "high-combed cock."[1] It would appear that the sobriquet, "Little Giant," which lasted throughout Douglas's life, was first applied to him on this memorable occasion. Political meetings were not so numerous at that early day as later and the reports of the speech were widely published. Prob-

[1] *Life, ante cit.*, p. 20.

ably the occasion had some influence in confirming the county (Morgan County) as Democratic in politics and Douglas's success stimulated him to become a candidate for his first serious public office.

Joseph Duncan had just been elected governor of Illinois and A. M. Jenkins, lieutenant-governor in August, 1834. Hardly had the new administration come into office early in January, 1835, when it passed an act providing for the election of states' attorneys by the legislature in joint session in place of appointment by the governor. The bill had been drafted by Douglas and was put through over the veto of the new governor, unwilling as he was to give up his appointive authority and, though chosen only by a plurality of votes, to surrender even in part his character as representative of the people of the state. Probably it would have been more delicate had Douglas declined to draft the bill, or, having drafted it, refused to accept any emolument in consequence.[1] If these ideas suggested themselves to the young man, he paid no attention to them, but suffered himself to be elected states' attorney for the First Judicial Circuit on February 10, 1835, by a very scant majority, being given thirty-eight votes against thirty-four for John J. Hardin, the former incumbent of the office and his most considerable competitor. The list of Douglas's supporters on

[1] John T. Morse, Jr., in writing of Lincoln (*Abraham Lincoln* —American Statesmen Series, 1899) says (Vol. I, p. 43): "What has chiefly interested the chroniclers is, that at this [1835] session he first saw Stephen A. Douglas, then a lobbyist, and said of him: 'He is the least man I ever saw.'"

that occasion, in fact, included some political workers who continued throughout life members of the Douglas "machine." The circumstances attending the incident, the fact that Douglas himself had up to that time never had a real case in court, had no law library, and had never practiced in any way, naturally made serious and dignified members of the bar look upon the action as a piece of political jobbery. The accusations were but too well founded and would have been sufficient to discredit an attorney who had more difficult duties to perform. The fact was, however, that the work before Douglas required more energy and activity than legal learning. Although the cases he had to prosecute included, according to the fluent Sheahan, "crime of almost every grade," there was a striking similarity among them, and the methods were decidedly rough and ready both on the part of attorneys and of the local courts. Douglas was still a mere stripling, small in figure, extremely short, and pinned his faith to a single copy of the criminal law, the only book he had with him. In the towns he visited, copies even of the statutes under which cases were brought, were lacking. An amusing attempt to discredit Douglas's early efforts turned entirely upon the spelling of the name of one of the counties employed in the indictments written by the prosecutor. It was necessary to send to Peoria for a copy of the act which was called in question and when this was finally produced, Douglas was able to show that his spelling of the name was cor-

rect. He, however, succeeded in establishing his point, owing to a printer's error which had made the spelling appear as it had been used by himself in the indictments.[1]

With questions of no more significance than this, and with a nature specially adapted to the making of friends, Douglas succeeded well enough in performing his not very difficult duties. He devoted far more time to mingling with persons of influence, getting the attention of voters, and generally building up a personal following than to routine business. This was with a view to the establishment of a distinct political organization. Douglas, sooner than almost any other in Illinois, saw the use that could be made of meetings and conventions, and regarded the personal work he was doing as merely an incident in the preparation for the convention, rather than as the direct preliminary to a contest for office. In Jacksonville he had thought it best to call a meeting for the purpose of consolidating Democratic opinion ; he now thought it desirable to perform a similar act of consolidation for the Democracy of Morgan County as a whole.

Working with his old friend Brooks, the proprietor of the little organ in Jacksonville, Douglas began a movement for a county convention. His idea was to cut down the number of candidates for each office, eliminate the factional or personal element, put forward a single candidate for each office

[1] Described by Johnson, *Life*, p. 24, following manuscript Autobiography.

and thus concentrate the power of the party in the hands of the clique of leaders who were able to control it. While, at the time, pretense was made that Morgan County was Whig in its politics, the fact remains that the reverse had been asserted after the Douglas meeting in Jacksonville when it had been announced as Democratic without question. The problem was essentially one of personal control rather than of political domination. So carefully had the preliminary preparations been made, that Douglas's county convention was entirely successful. When the meeting convened at Jacksonville, a complete ticket was chosen. The county was entitled to six members of the lower house of the legislature and there were various more or less valuable county offices. Two members of the state Senate were also to be chosen. A complete ticket was put in the field and was met by an opposing ticket headed by Hardin, the state's attorney, who less than a year before had been displaced by Douglas's shrewd manœuvre in the state legislature. Douglas was unable to avoid meeting Hardin on the stump and finally determined to accept a nomination for the legislature instead of one of the candidates already named who gave way to him. Placing himself in the field as the leader of the contest, he carried through the struggle for the regular nomination and convention system and succeeded in securing the election of the full ticket with one exception—that of his principal opponent Hardin, the leader of his

own ticket, who succeeded in gaining access to the legislature.

The contest was of signal importance in several ways. It practically assured the maintenance of the convention system and implied for the immediate future a rigid system of party control with a hierarchy of leaders who directed the rank and file and compelled them to surrender personal preferences. The convention system had already been discussed and attempted sporadically in other counties, but would probably not have fastened itself upon the state so soon, had it not been for the success of Douglas in consolidating his personal following. In another way also the occasion was important. The campaign was carried on by the usual methods, with a copious flow of corn whiskey. The methods to which Douglas then became accustomed doubtless had a significant influence upon the mind of a young man unfamiliar with the world and possessing no illusions concerning public life and public service. "In those days," says ex-Governor Ford of Illinois, "the people drank vast quantities of whiskey and other liquors; and the dispensation of liquors, or treating, as it was called by candidates for office, was an indispensable element of success at elections."[1] Probably it was during these early days of his life that Douglas laid the foundation of those habits which later marred his public career and were ultimately a primary cause of his death.

[1] Ford, *History of Illinois*, p. 104.

CHAPTER II

STATE POLITICS

By such means as have already been sketched, Douglas had definitely made his entry into public life. His choice as district attorney had been the result of a shrewd manœuvre which might have given him merely a temporary incumbency, followed by retirement to private life. Douglas, however, had exhibited the first attribute of the politician—the capacity to adjust himself to events and to pass rapidly from one position to a new one. He was now a member of the legislative body of his newly adopted state. The session which opened in December, 1836, has been described as the most important that ever assembled in Illinois prior to the Civil War, because of the adoption of a large scheme of material development based upon public aid. The fever of speculative exploitation was then sweeping over the state. Agitation had already begun during the summer and fall of 1836 in favor of a general scheme of "internal improvements." The plan was inclusive, and was supported not only by the farming class but also by the townspeople, who had become infected with the speculative mania. When the legislature met, it found itself called upon to determine what should be done. The governor in his message had condemned Jackson's

policies and had thus raised a warm political issue which could not fail to provoke ill-feeling and to lead to partisan balloting upon all questions presented to that body. The scheme which finally took shape comprised a system of railroads running from Galena to the mouth of the Ohio, from Alton to Shawneetown, from Alton to Mt. Carmel, from Quincy to the Indiana boundary of the state, and various other lines, including in all about 1,300 miles. By way of watercourse improvement, there was demanded provision for the deepening of several rivers, while in order to silence dissatisfaction among the counties which got no appropriation, there was asked a distribution of funds for local use.

It was in some ways a remarkable body of men to which this plan and others of striking local significance were submitted. Not only Douglas but Abraham Lincoln was enrolled as a member of the legislature, while with them sat Hardin, Douglas's recent rival, John Calhoun, James Shields, and others. Douglas, however, started with a distinction acquired by his vigorous campaign. He became chairman of the Committee on Petitions and in that capacity had some important work demanding his personal attention. Petitions for divorce came numerously to the body over which Douglas presided and, recognizing the importance of the issue, he presented to the legislature an inclusive report, concluding with a resolution "that it is unconstitutional and foreign to the duties of legislation for the

legislature to grant bills of divorce." [1] The resolution was adopted by a decisive majority (fifty-three to thirty-two) and the obnoxious system of legislative divorces was terminated.

But this creditable performance was shortly to be offset by action in another field calculated to counterbalance the prestige acquired. Douglas was later to become known as a shrewd and daring real estate speculator. Finding himself confronted with the question of internal improvements and public works as an immediate and a pressing issue, he threw in his lot with the element which favored development. Early in the session he submitted resolutions providing for the completion of the Illinois and Michigan canal which had already encountered serious difficulties involving large outlay; for the construction of a railroad from the end of the canal to the mouth of the Ohio; for another railroad from Quincy east to the state line; and for various other appropriations.

These resolutions were merely an incident in the general discussion into which the legislature now plunged. Douglas recognized the lack of resources under which the state was laboring and proposed the issue of bonds, the interest on them to be met by sales of public lands. If he did not go as far as some of his more radical colleagues, and if his youth and total lack of knowledge of business excuse him for being carried away by the current demands of

[1] *House Journal*, pp. 60 ff.; also Johnson's *Douglas*, pp. 33–34, especially footnote p. 34.

special interests, the fact remains that at the time he did not raise his voice in opposition to the urgent calls of speculators. Sharing in the work of the committee of conference which attempted to reconcile the views of the two branches of the state legislature, Douglas, however, endeavored to restrain somewhat the excesses of the land speculators and directly opposed any system of improvement to which the state should be a party or in which it should hold stock. He likewise antagonized a scheme whereby Illinois would have authorized an increase in the stock of the state bank and would have become a large stockholder in it. Finally, however, he yielded his assent to a plan whereby large sums were voted for the improvement of the rivers of the state and still larger subsidies were devoted to the establishment of railroad lines, with a division of $200,000 among the several counties.[1] Although Douglas's enthusiastic biographer Sheahan claims for him that, had his original plan been adopted, several millions of dollars would have been saved, he is obliged to admit that the legislature "laid the foundation of a public debt which for nearly a quarter of a century . . . loomed up in all its hideous proportions, an object of terror and of oppression to the people," while a more recent though hardly less sympathetic writer grants that Douglas was put "in a peculiarly trying position."

It was only a short time after the adjournment of the legislature when disaster swept over the country.

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 32.

The state bank went to destruction, local bank stock being tremendously depreciated, and the system of internal improvements at once received a decisive check. It was not strange that the members of the legislature felt keenly the criticism to which their action had exposed them, and Douglas, who had had the foresight to accept a place as Register of the Land Office at Springfield, found himself well out of the difficulty to which he would have been exposed had he remained a member of the legislature during the special session shortly to be called by Governor Duncan. The place as register had been given to Douglas under conditions which suggested a political "deal." During his first term in the legislature, it had been voted to move the capital of the state to Springfield. There had naturally been keen competition among the various towns desirous of being designated. Douglas had favored Springfield and had done what he could to secure the location of the capital at that place. He was attached to the town, had gained his first start there and not unnaturally supported its claims. The charge that he had done the work in return for a pledge of the support of the Springfield people for the registership was one of the usual accusations likely to be made under such conditions, but seems to have no historical basis. The fact that Douglas had opposed moving the capital, though if it were to be moved at all he had favored Springfield, tends to relieve him from the imputations thus cast upon the conditions under which he had assumed office.

He had in any event chosen wisely from a pecuniary standpoint. Local newspapers promptly charged that his receipts were enormous,[1] and it is certain that they were sufficient to put him for the first time in his life upon a thoroughly independent basis. He was still, however, as much of a politician as ever, although holding a more or less non-political office. He resumed the life which he had led in Springfield [2] when he had first opened his office there without law books, without training, and with only a few political backers. Although not in the legislative body, he continued to be a close observer of state politics. The special session which had been summoned by Governor Duncan met but a little while after the inauguration of President Van Buren, who had called a special session of Congress before which he had laid a plan for a sub-treasury system. The position of Douglas with reference to national politics at this period is not clear ; his attention was far more closely concentrated upon local than upon Federal issues.

The effect of the disturbances, however, was to weaken the Democratic party throughout the country and of course in Illinois. There was danger that the party machinery which Douglas had been

[1] Johnson, *Life*, p. 35.

[2] When Springfield was organized as a city in 1840, under a special charter, a "grand ball" was given in the American House to celebrate the event. Invitations were sent to St. Louis and Chicago. "It was designed to be a grand affair which was to include wit, beauty, and fashion of the entire state. Among the managers appear the names of A. Lincoln, S. A. Douglas." Moses, *Illinois Historical and Statistical*, Vol. I, p. 431.

so largely instrumental in building up, would go to pieces and that the controlling elements would lose the management of the state government and the patronage which they had held so long. This disorganization of public opinion naturally revived the hostility to the convention system. During the special session of the legislature, the political situation was fully discussed and finally a state convention was summoned. Douglas had visited the capital for the purpose of securing concert of action and at a meeting on July 27th it had been determined that the convention should be called in December. The preliminary work was placed in the hands of a committee of thirty of which Douglas was made a member, while in each congressional district a committee of five was organized to look after local conditions. The committee of thirty issued an address to the people of the state which appeared during the early autumn and probably had some effect in directing public opinion. Douglas traveled hither and thither, addressing various local mass-meetings and now fully defending the policy of Van Buren in financial and other matters. There were then three congressional districts in the state and Douglas, as a member of the committee controlling one of these, was in a most important position of vantage. With this start, it was now not strange that he should endeavor to transfer himself from local to national politics. Just when he determined to become the successor of William L. May, then representing his district, is not certain. Practice

favored the continuance of the congressmen for more than one term and May had had but one. The convention system which Douglas had so earnestly advocated, however, demanded that the nomination should be made in convention and consequently one was called to meet at Peoria in November, 1837. Brooks, the old-time backer of Douglas, had been doing what he could to shape public opinion, and to make sure that the right men were nominated as representatives of the county in the district convention. Singularly enough, Douglas was nominated on the first ballot, and thus as a candidate stepped immediately into the place of a recognized member of Congress who had rendered efficient service, and who was now displaced by an electoral device which was far from having obtained permanent recognition. The convention itself had represented only about two-fifths of the total number of counties in the district.

Had Douglas been sincerely attached to the convention system, he would hardly have subjected it to so rude a shock as that which it now received from the onset of public criticism. Douglas, in fact, was not a strong candidate. He was then less than twenty-five years of age; the party was generally in a bad condition; he was inexperienced save in purely local matters; he had no financial resources with which to back the organization. It was a wonderful tribute to his personality and skill as a manipulator that he should have received the nomination at all. The fact that at about the same time

the Democratic state convention nominated weak men as candidates more than correspondingly weakened the local tickets. Douglas was not the only Federal appointee designated on the slate, and the machine-made appearance which his own nomination presented was characteristic of practically the whole party program throughout Illinois. He undoubtedly realized the difficulties of the situation, but he was in a position where he must go forward or lose ground. The land office business was by no means so profitable after the panic of 1837 as it had been before the disaster, while the character of the work did not suit Douglas's active spirit. He had exhausted about all that was immediately within his reach in state politics and his transfer to the national capital was the next and natural step for him to take. His position in the party had been unexpectedly conspicuous, but was not sufficiently confirmed to warrant him in believing that two years outside of direct participation in political matters would leave him in a condition to regain his place. He plunged into the canvass, in opposition to a rival candidate named John T. Stuart, who was described as an eminent lawyer and a fine speaker, to neither of which classes Douglas could as yet be said to belong.

The progress of the campaign showed that he was heavily handicapped by the unfair tactics of his party, while the vigor and ability of his opponent would in any case have made it difficult for him to

gain headway against the Whigs. Stuart was not only popular in Springfield, Douglas's own headquarters, but he was widely known throughout the state, and had the stamina and energy that political campaigns in those primitive days especially demanded. Yet the contest seemed to be more evenly matched than many had expected. Douglas gave a good account of himself even in a personal affray with his opponent, who picked up his rival and twisted his neck vigorously, while Douglas responded with a severe bite that left its mark in after years upon Stuart's person. The result, however, showed that the political jobbery of the Democrats had disgusted the district as well as the state, so that Stuart secured a small majority. About all that Douglas carried out of the campaign was a reputation as a vigorous and resourceful fighter. It was the general belief that no other man could have done so well as he in this trying struggle. This, however, was rather cold consolation.

Douglas now found himself in September, 1838, out of his snug nest in the land office and with but little to rely upon. He had not been able to save much money, and what he had saved had been heavily drawn upon by political contributions and his own expenses. Like most disappointed politicians, he fell back on the practice of law, his main obstacle being that he had no legal information. However, he opened an office in Springfield. The winter's work was not particularly profitable, per-

haps because he spent more time in political scheming than in preparing for practice or in attendance on the courts. Early in the spring he had a sharp and wordy contest with Lincoln, who had himself begun the practice of law, although the affair had no general significance and was merely a local bout. Other political imbroglios, including a personal fight with a newspaper editor in a neighboring town, were less creditable and Douglas was at this time, perhaps more than at any other in his career, in danger of dropping back into the place of an incompetent local attorney who devotes himself not to law but to the meaner tasks of political management.

Fortune, however, or his own restless energy, did not permit this inglorious termination of his career. Douglas continued his political efforts, it is true, sharing in local conventions, but he also put himself upon a more dignified basis than he had thus far been able to attain by securing a place as counsel in an important political case brought by some members of the Whig party to test the constitutionality of that provision of the Illinois constitution which allowed "inhabitants" to vote at state elections. The case never came to trial in the Supreme Court, Douglas and his associate counsel being called in at a moment when the Democrats had been defeated in the Circuit Court, and securing an adjournment on technical grounds until after the election of 1840 had passed by. As the case had been brought up largely with a view to the

effect of a decision in that election, such action was equivalent, for the immediate purpose, to a victory for the Democrats.

This danger out of the way, Douglas plunged into the fierce contest of Van Buren and Harrison for the presidency and succeeded in carrying the state in favor of Van Buren. The campaign was one of the most bitter that Illinois had yet known and Douglas had acquitted himself with more than common skill and success. The party owed him something because of the clever trick he had turned in securing an adjournment of the case before the Supreme Court, as well as for his active and unpaid efforts during the campaign. What would he take? The party would undoubtedly grant him anything that was available. He had already declined a renomination to the legislature, recognizing, as every aspirant for political honors does, that a second term in a state legislative body means that he who accepts it probably has not much in store for him in Federal politics. Fortunately, the secretaryship of state was opened to him by the resignation of the previous incumbent. This resignation had not been voluntary; it was the result of legal proceedings instituted by the governor who desired to oust Field, the previous appointee, because he was a Whig, while the administration was now Democratic. The case had been decided in Field's favor by the Supreme Court of Illinois upon appeal from the lower court which had decided against him; but so much irritation had been created as a result of the pro-

ceedings, that Field, foreseeing that his retention of the office would be made a political issue, withdrew [1] and was succeeded by Douglas. The latter took office just at the close of 1840.[2] The new place, however, proved to be of little importance save as a stepping-stone.

Douglas's accession to the Supreme Court of the state of Illinois is one of the most singular turns in the political wheel of fortune by which he was being carried steadily on. He had become Secretary of State and had accepted the place as a temporary makeshift, just as he had accepted the various political offices which he had held in the past. Apparently he had had no thought of securing advancement in the legal profession, nor had he done anything which could serve as a medium of training

[1] The governor named J. A. McClernand as Secretary of State in place of Alexander P. Field, a Whig. The legislature refused to confirm the nomination. After adjournment of the legislature, he again commissioned McClernand. McClernand "made a formal demand for the office, and its surrender being refused, sued out a writ of *quo warranto* before Judge Breese, who upon the hearing decided in his favor. Field appealed the case to the Supreme Court, where it was ably argued on his behalf by Cyrus Walker, Justice Butterfield and Levi Davis, and for the appellee by S. A. Douglas, James Shields, and the Attorney-General, Wickliffe Kitchell. The decision of the court below was reversed." Moses, *Illinois Historical and Statistical*, p. 443.

[2] The Democrats "availed themselves of the first opportunity offering itself to override, and virtually to reverse, the decision of the Supreme Court by promptly confirming Stephen A. Douglas whose nomination as Secretary of State was among the first official acts of the governor after the assembling of the called session, on November 30th. Mr. Douglas, however, only held the position until February 27th." *Ibid.*, p. 444.

to fit him for preferment in that direction. His law had throughout the few years of his career been simply a servant to his ambition, and that ambition had been consistently and steadily political. He had hardly taken office as Secretary of State when there appeared to be a probability of a new arrangement of the various scheming groups which were in practical control of the legislature. It had been thought that a change in the organization of the Supreme Court would be desirable at the session of 1840–1841. The idea was to substitute for the Circuit Courts of the state a larger bench of Supreme Court judges, making nine in all, instead of the four previously appointed, the judges thereafter to be assigned to circuits. This plan apparently did not grow out of any general desire for better judicial organization, but out of partisan prejudice which had been stimulated by sundry decisions of the court in recent cases that involved political issues.[1] Douglas, being a "good mixer," had early become popular with the legislative wire-pullers and he now demanded some action with reference to the court, that there might be adequate rebuke to it for its alleged political tendencies. The bill reorganizing the Supreme Court was therefore hastened forward

[1] The court had "held that . . . one Kyle, upon the reception of whose vote the question was made, possessed all the qualifications required by the affidavit, under the law of 1829. . . . The broad and important question of alien suffrage under the constitution did not arise in the case, and no opinion of the court was expressed upon it." Davidson and Stuvé, *History of Illinois*, p. 456.

by all the means of partisanship and legislative trickery, and was speedily enacted.[1] Thus arose the question of new appointments to the bench.

It would have been far better for Douglas at this juncture had he resolutely refused to consider a judicial appointment, especially in view of the share he had had in urging the reorganization. He was, however, troubled with no such scruples, or with undue modesty of any kind. The report shortly gained ground that he would be rewarded for past political service in this way and Douglas made no effort to contradict the rumor. Despite the opposition of the more conservative and older lawyers of the state, his name was finally accepted as one of the appointees and he took the place with the usual statement about the sacrifice involved in a step that would cause him wholly to surrender himself to a judicial career.

In the court as it was reorganized, Douglas was associated with some whose names were subsequently conspicuous in local history and with others who have continued practically unknown to fame. William Wilson was Chief-Justice and his associates were Samuel D. Lockwood, Theophilus W. Smith, Thomas C. Browne, Thomas Ford, Sidney Breese,

[1] "Meanwhile the bill to reorganize the Supreme Court was pending before the legislature, and with the rendition of this decision by the court, it was circulated about by the politicians, and boldly charged by Douglas in a speech made in the lobby of the house, that the main question had been purposely evaded by the court to allay the apprehension of Democrats as to the alien vote, and to conciliate their favor, with the object of defeating the bill." *History of Illinois*, p. 457.

Walter B. Scates, Samuel H. Treat, and Douglas himself.[1] Douglas was assigned to the fifth district for the performance of circuit duties under the new law. The only important feature about the fifth district was that it included the city of Quincy, in Hancock County, and a place called Nauvoo at which had recently settled the peculiar religious sectaries who have come to be known as Mormons. Douglas at once began his duties and handed down

[1] The five additional supreme judges elected by the legislature under this law were, Thomas Ford (subsequently governor), Sidney Breese, Walter B. Scates, Samuel H. Treat, and Stephen A. Douglas.

"The last named gentleman had been of counsel for the aliens, had derived his information of how the case was going to be decided in June preceding from Judge Smith, had obtained the continuance then on the defect in the record as pointed out by him, had made a violent attack upon the old judges by a characteristic speech in the lobby, and had furnished McClernand the data upon which the latter denounced the court; in view of all of which, it seems strange that he had sought and obtained a position side by side with the gentlemen he had traduced and attempted so much to bring into disrepute. Partisan scheming and the cravings of office could not well go further.

"The new judges were charged with partisan conduct by the Whig press of the period, in the secret appointment of a clerk of the Supreme Court. Ebenezer Peck, it seems, as a member of the legislature had originally opposed the judiciary bill; but his position became suddenly changed, and the bill passed the House by one majority over the objections of the council. After taking their seats, the new members of the court had no consultation with the old judges on the subject of the clerkship, and not a word was said in open court about removing the incumbent, Duncan. Indeed, one of them had given out that to avoid the imputation of being a partisan court, the clerkship was not to be disturbed. The public astonishment was not inconsiderable, therefore, when shortly after its adjournment, Peck announced himself as the clerk by appointment of the majority of the court." *History of Illinois*, p. 460.

various decisions. Among those which he delivered were Woodward *vs.* Turnbull, an action for debt involving the issuance of local licenses for the exhibition of a menagerie in which Justice Scates delivered a long dissenting opinion; Stevens *vs.* Stebbins, another action for debt, raising the interesting question whether there was any material variance in law between "Stevens" the Christian name of Mr. Stebbins and "Steven" the form in which the name had appeared in a note, Douglas reaching the conclusion that the variation between the two names was immaterial; Warren *vs.* Nexsen, an action of assumpsit involving a minor legal question of technique; Gardner *vs.* the People, which involved a motion for a writ of error in a murder case; Roper *vs.* Clabaugh, in which was presented the question of trespass upon lands by one individual who took away fence-rails belonging to another; and other cases of the same relatively inconspicuous sort.[1] Most of the causes which Douglas was called upon to decide furnished no principles of law that could not be settled by a man of shrewd common sense, and this he possessed in abundant measure, even though provided only with the single law book with which the new Supreme Court justice but a few years before had begun his career as prosecuting District Attorney. Although the cases coming into the tribunal to which Douglas had been elected were at that time possibly not of first-class impor-

[1] The cases here referred to will be found at length in Scammon's *Illinois Reports*, Vols. III–V, 1840-1843.

tance, the work lying before him was as significant in its way as any to which he was likely to be called, and was more important than the work of the courts in many older and better-settled commonwealths. It was unfortunately true that Douglas had but too little training for the position which he now assumed. The condition of the bar, and of the bench as well, was exceedingly crude at that early day, and no very great amount of legal acumen was called for; nevertheless, a good deal of tact and skill was needed in order to maintain the position of a member of the Supreme Court before a bar which included many able and alert minds, making up in shrewdness what they lacked in legal learning.

Of more interest than the character of the cases passed upon by Douglas is the fact that one of the practicing lawyers who appeared before the court was Abraham Lincoln. John J. Hardin, Douglas's sometime rival for political honors, was another of the lawyers, while among his colleagues on the bench was Sidney Breese, who was in the future to be associated with him as a member of the United States Senate. Lyman Trumbull, who appeared before the court as an attorney, was also to join Douglas in the Senate some years later. Altogether the make-up of the bench and the bar gave Douglas interesting and valuable connections and enabled him to extend his political acquaintance. The experience, moreover, brought him into contact with men with whom he was later to engage in some of the keenest struggles of his life, and gave him the

opportunity of estimating their mental caliber in a way that would probably not have been possible under other circumstances. He gained an insight into the character of Lincoln that served him in good stead in subsequent years, and laid the foundation for the respect which he later accorded to the ungraceful countryman who was to guide the destinies of the nation during the Civil War. There was no close association between Douglas and Lincoln, nor probably was there any love lost on either side. Yet each contrived to get a fair appreciation of the other.[1]

The physical equipment of the court, too, was as limited as the training of those who appeared before it. "Rude frame or log houses served the purposes of bench and bar. The judge sat usually upon a platform with a plain table or pine-board for a desk. A larger table below accommodated the attorneys who followed the judge in his circuit from county to county."[2] Nor was there anything in the demeanor

[1] "When Lincoln was admitted to the bar, the practice of the law was in a very crude condition in Illinois. General principles, gathered from a few text-books, formed the simple basis upon which lawyers tried cases and framed arguments in improvised court rooms. But the advance was rapid and carried Lincoln forward with it. The raw material, if the phrase may be pardoned, was excellent; there were many men in the state who united a natural aptitude for the profession with high ability, ambition, and a progressive spirit. Lincoln was brought in contact with them all, whether they rode his circuit or not, because the Federal courts were held only in Springfield. Among them was Stephen A. Douglas." Morse's *Lincoln, ante cit.*, Vol. I, p. 67.

[2] Johnson, *Douglas*, p. 63.

of the judges to inspire particular awe or anxiety among those who practiced. "The relations between the bench and the bar were free and easy, and flashes of wit and humor and personal repartee were constantly passing from one to the other. The court-rooms in those days were always crowded. To go to court and listen to the witnesses and lawyers was among the chief amusements of the frontier settlements." [1] Douglas did not attempt to raise himself above his easy plane of familiarity. One who knew him well says that "when presiding as a judge on the bench he would frequently, while the lawyers were addressing the jury, go down among the spectators and seat himself beside an old friend and visit with him, all the time keeping cognizance of what was going on, ready to respond when his attention to the case was required, maintaining all the time the most perfect order. He has been seen at Knoxville, when the court-room was crowded, to seat himself upon the knee of old Governor McMurtry and, with his arm upon his shoulder, talk with him for a considerable time." [2]

Douglas was, however, still preëminently a politician. Although there was comparatively little criticism of his decisions, it was evident that they were not the product of very much thought, and that their author was preparing for some other field than that of judicial life, notwithstanding his early

[1] Arnold, *Reminiscences of the Illinois Bar*, quoted by Johnson, p. 63.

[2] Carr, *Douglas*, pp. 42–43.

statement to the contrary. In this respect he did not differ from his associates.[1]

His colleague, Sidney Breese, had long felt an ambition to go to the United States Senate, and in this Douglas himself thought he might perhaps rival his associate. Senator Young was hoping to be re-elected in the autumn of 1842 and Douglas's friends at Springfield, knowing that he and Breese would soon be in a personal war, began a movement to secure support for Douglas as a potential "dark-horse" when the contest was settled in the legislature. So well did they lay their plans that Douglas received a very substantial vote, although Breese was finally elected by a small margin. Douglas himself probably realized that the attempt thus boldly made in his behalf had been rather too ambitious, and he now determined to effect something of a more modest character. He continued to cast his eyes longingly toward the national government and in the autumn of 1842 he allowed the rumor to be circulated that he would not object to being drafted into the service of the party at Washington. Illinois had been gaining rapidly in population and the census of 1840 had indicated that the state ought to have seven members of Congress in-

[1] One of the newly appointed judges, writing of the reorganization of the court, said: "The highest courts are but indifferent tribunals for the settlement of great political questions. . . . When any great political question on which parties are arrayed comes up for decision, the utmost which can be expected of them is an able and learned argument in favor of their own party, whose views they must naturally favor."

stead of only four. This change, however, required action by the legislature in re-districting the state. The problem was how to retain all of the districts in Democratic hands. Here Douglas saw his opportunity. If a suitable district could be selected for him, he might easily secure election. The revision act was passed in June, 1842, and during the next spring the problem of a nomination was taken in hand. The fifth district or circuit in which Douglas had been holding court was in part covered by a fifth congressional district, so arranged as to give him the maximum number of favorable votes. A small body of Democrats on June 5, 1843, after the farce of considering a number of candidates, gave Douglas a unanimous nomination and perfected the organization necessary to carry on the contest. Douglas, after the usual excuses and expressions of regret, resigned office on the 28th, little more than three weeks after his nomination.[1] His opponent, a Southerner named Browning, was put forward by the Whigs and the campaign was waged not only upon the usual local issues but also upon distinctly sectional lines. The contest, although not unusually long, was carried on under great difficulties. Constant travel by all sorts of conveyances, the necessity of addressing many public meetings in the open air and the usual election excesses, wore out both candidates and at the close of the campaign, Douglas was obliged to take to his bed, where he lay for some time with

[1] Scammon, *Illinois Reports*, Vol. IV, p. viii.

COLLEGE OF THE SEQUOIAS
LIBRARY

a serious illness. The election, however, resulted in his favor, giving him a fairly large majority. The district had been too well arranged to make good the chances of his opponent.

CHAPTER III

THE MORMONS IN ILLINOIS

COINCIDENT with Douglas's short term as Secretary of State, local politics underwent a curious experience—an experience which extended into and partly modified not only Douglas's brief career on the Supreme Bench of the state but also his later political career. This was the entanglement with the Mormon church into which he was, probably unconsciously, drawn by his desire to secure political support and advance the interests of his party.

The experience with the Mormons covers, in Douglas's life, a continuous period of some six years, 1840–1846, and was destined to furnish him food for future thought. It has been variously interpreted by historians and biographers, some of whom regard it as little more than a temporarily annoying situation out of which Douglas doubtless made the best that was possible; while others bitterly denounce what they consider the unprincipled attitude adopted by him in connection with the fortunes of what was thought by the people of the state to be an odious sect, full of danger to the commonwealth. The truth seems to be that, throughout this singular episode, Douglas hardly recognized the character of the forces with which he was dealing, being in this

regard perhaps not very different from his contemporaries. He always endeavored to avoid antagonizing in an undue way any large section of voters who were not distinctly determined in opposition to him already. It is fair to suppose, moreover, that in all of his decisions as a judge, he was animated by the desire to hold the scales substantially even. In the case of the Mormons, both the political and the judicial motive combined, with the result that the Mormons invariably found Douglas one of the most sympathetic judges with whom they had to deal. The Mormon experience throws into unusually clear relief some of the methods which were becoming habitual with rising politicians.

The Mormons had first gained a foothold at Nauvoo, Illinois, having come largely from Missouri. In Missouri their politics had usually been Democratic, yet they had been driven out by the Democratic governor of a Democratic state, while Van Buren, although himself a Democrat, had refused to give them any relief. When they arrived at Nauvoo in Hancock County, Ill., they declared that they would join neither party but would vote for the one which would give them the greatest aid. The announcement of this policy created no little excitement among local politicians, for with parties as evenly balanced as they then were, it was apparent to most persons that the Mormons might easily come to hold the balance of power. On settling at Nauvoo, they determined to secure some

distinct recognition from the state. They employed a certain John C. Bennett as their agent and sent him to Springfield with instructions to secure a city charter and authority to establish a "military legion." Bennett naturally went to the representatives of Hancock County in the legislature and addressed himself chiefly to a Mr. Little who was then a senator for the county. Bennett also thought it well to keep in touch with the Democrats, and after casting about for that person with whom it would be most expedient to deal, he determined to go to Douglas.[1]

There is no record, probably, of the exact nature of his negotiations but the outcome shows what they were clearly enough. The plan as finally developed was to have the charter, which Bennett desired, presented to the legislature by Whig interests, while Douglas undoubtedly promised that Democratic opposition should be prevented from showing itself. Senator Little did present such a charter, which was referred to the Judiciary Committee whose chairman, a Mr. Snyder, was a Democrat. Snyder recommended the passage of the charter, which was then adopted by a *viva voce* vote, no one wishing to go on record either one way or the other. The charter incorporated the city of Nauvoo, provided

[1] Douglas's relations with the Mormons are best set forth in Linn's *Story of the Mormons*, and Ford's *History of Illinois*. Sheahan's *Life of Stephen A. Douglas* and Johnson's *Stephen A. Douglas* review the episode in their customary way. Some light on the Mormon situation in Illinois was also afforded by Douglas himself in certain of his later utterances.

for the usual officers, and gave them the usual powers to pass ordinances in case they "were not repugnant to the Constitution of the United States or this state [Illinois]." Later the question arose whether the ambiguous language of the charter permitted them to pass ordinances in violation of the laws of the state and to establish a system of government for themselves. Important as bearing upon this question is the fact that the charter established courts with extensive jurisdiction, the municipal or higher court being composed of the mayor as chief-justice and the four aldermen as his associates, but an appeal was allowed to the Circuit Court of the county. This singular charter also incorporated the militia of Nauvoo under the title of "The Nauvoo Legion." That body was made entirely independent of the military organization of the state, and was divorced from the control of all the officers of the state militia except the governor. The commissioned officers of the Legion were to constitute a court-martial, which was to make and execute all ordinances necessary for its government, and was not bound to regard the laws of the state of Illinois, though it was forbidden to do anything repugnant to the constitution. This Legion was placed at the disposal of the mayor for the purpose of assuring the execution of the laws and ordinances of the city of Nauvoo. Had it not been for the shrewdness of the Mormons in arranging for the support of both parties, it is hard to see how such a document could have passed any

legislative body. Governor Ford who took office some three years after the charter had been passed at the session of the Illinois legislature in 1840–1841, thinks that the powers "were unheard of and anti-republican in many particulars; and capable of infinite abuse by a people disposed to abuse them."[1] The opinion is undoubtedly just and it would be hard to account for the passage of such measures on any ground other than that which is assigned by him—political timidity and unwillingness to run the hazard of defeat.

Whatever may be thought of this charter and however little its ultimate effects were at the time foreseen, the real influence of the Mormons shortly became apparent. A city government was speedily organized at Nauvoo and the Nauvoo Legion was established. Joseph H. Smith was not only mayor but also commander of the Legion and head of the church. In the meanwhile Douglas had been elected to the bench of the Supreme Court of the state and in that capacity he had been placed in a position in which his recent attitude toward the Mormons, while Secretary of State, was likely to be sternly tested. As he had assisted in passing, perhaps had been primarily responsible for, the singular charter of the Mormons, he was now to be called upon to adjudicate the questions which might arise under it. The legislature had selected Douglas as judge on the 15th of February, 1841, and as we have already seen,[2] he was now sent to the fifth

[1] Ford, *History of Illinois*, p. 265. [2] *Supra*, p. 45.

circuit—the Quincy district—which happened to be that in which the Mormons had taken up their residence. Under the conditions, it would not have been strange if the inhabitants of the district, who speedily became antagonistic to Mormon influence, had given special attention to the attitude which Douglas would assume. The circuit had been much agitated by the conflicts between the Mormons and the so-called Gentiles by whom they were surrounded, and the position of a judge was one of exceptional difficulty in such cases, because of the exceedingly bitter feeling that had been produced between the Mormon and non-Mormon groups in the population. Douglas, however, did not waver in his attitude. He sought to give the Mormons full recognition in all of his decisions, and on one occasion when Joseph H. Smith, who was held by the populace to be responsible for the crimes charged against his sect generally, was personally endangered, Douglas was largely responsible for rescuing the leader from a lynching which was imminent.[1]

Most of the cases coming before Douglas in this connection were comparatively trivial, but there was at least one of very considerable importance. This one raised a question concerning the Nauvoo Legion and its power under the charter which had been granted it by the legislature through the influence of Senator Little and Secretary Douglas. Douglas, almost as soon as he took his place on the

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 50.

bench, had appointed Doctor Bennett, the agent of the Mormons, a Master of Chancery, doubtless as representing the Mormon interests in Hancock County. Bennett was not only an influential Mormon, an alderman of Nauvoo and a major-general in the Nauvoo Legion, but prior to his joining the Mormons, he had also been appointed an adjutant-general of the state militia. Within a very short time after Douglas had taken office as judge, a warrant for the arrest of Joseph H. Smith and several other Mormons was issued by Governor Carlin, of Illinois, at the demand of the governor of Missouri. Smith's case came up before Judge Douglas and he was discharged upon a technicality. This he, perhaps not unnaturally, regarded as a recognition of Mormonism by the Democratic party and directly assumed a position as an ardent supporter of Douglas, publishing a proclamation to that effect in the Nauvoo newspapers in which he described the judge as a "master-spirit." The manifesto of Smith apparently transferred the Mormon vote from the Whigs to the Democrats and led to an immediate change of front on the part of the Whig party, which now could hardly find strong enough language in denunciation of Mormon iniquities.

In the meantime the growth of this singular sect had been proceeding rapidly. It numbered about 16,000 in Hancock County in 1842, while, according to the estimate of Governor Thomas Ford,[1] there were "several thousand" scattered about in other

[1] Ford, *History of Illinois*, p. 313.

counties. This was a compact body of voters which could not be neglected in a state where political power was as evenly balanced as in Illinois. The conduct of the Mormons and their status before the law, however, rendered it difficult to overlook certain of their acts and consequently almost continuous conflicts had occurred between them and the recognized state officials. Crimes of all sorts were currently attributed to Mormon influence, or to the direct action of members of the sect, and the number of cases coming before the courts, in which the religious and social prejudice aroused by Mormon doctrine was involved, was very considerable.

In the opinion that Douglas had rendered in 1841 in Smith's case, the attitude of the Mormons with reference to military service had already been discussed. The decision was construed, both by the Mormons and by others, as permitting them to control their military company through a court-martial of its own officers. According to Linn[1] the so-called "Nauvoo Legion" had actually been recognized as independent of state control by virtue of a provision of law which allowed it to be governed by a court-martial of its own officers. This view of its independence, taken by the Mormons, says Mr. Linn, "may be seen in the following general order signed by Smith and Bennett in May, 1841, founded on an opinion by Judge Stephen A. Douglas:

"'The officers and privates belonging to the

[1] *Story of the Mormons*, p. 237, *et seq.*

Legion are exempt from all military duty not required by the legally constituted authorities thereof; they are therefore expressly inhibited from performing any military service not ordered by the general officers or directed by the court-martial.'

"In other words this city military company was entirely independent of even the governor of the state. Little wonder that the Presidency, writing about the new law to the Saints abroad said: ''Tis all we ever claimed.' "

With the support which had been obtained from Douglas's decision and other favorable verdicts, the Mormons were emboldened to push their views before the courts as well as to try to exert some political influence. In 1842, as we have seen, Governor Carlin had issued a warrant for the arrest of Joseph H. Smith, then the head of the Mormon church, on the ground that he was a fugitive from justice in Missouri. Governor Ford has stated that this warrant had never been executed and was still outstanding when he took office two years later. The Mormons, however, were desirous of having the case well tested in the Federal court, and upon their application a duplicate warrant was issued during the winter of 1842–1843, and placed in the hands of the sheriff of Sangamon County. Joseph H. Smith consequently surrendered himself a prisoner in Springfield and then applied for a writ of *habeas corpus* to Judge Polk of the Federal court.[1] Polk

[1] Ford, *History*, p. 314.

discharged Smith and, as the case had been managed for him by lawyers who were Whig in politics while Judge Polk was also a Whig, the Mormons now began to incline toward that side in politics.

The situation was rendered particularly interesting because of the approaching election of a congressman in the Mormon district in August, 1843. Two candidates, Cyrus Walker and Joseph P. Hoge, the former a Whig, the latter a Democrat, had presented themselves and the Mormons were inclined to favor Walker. Further legal proceedings were just then instituted by the governor of Illinois by reason of a new demand from the governor of Missouri for the person of Smith, based upon an indictment found against him in Missouri on the 5th of June, 1843. Judge Ford's warrant resulted in the arrest of the Mormon leader, and Walker appeared as his counsel. In the course of the proceedings before the municipal court in Nauvoo, Walker's opponent, Hoge, being present, both men were called upon to express their opinion as to the power of the municipal court to issue writs of *habeas corpus* in all cases of imprisonment, and both affirmed the power. The municipal court discharged Smith, and immediately a request was made upon the governor for militia to renew the attempt to secure enforcement of the warrant issued by the government. The governor was inclined to order out the militia. He restrained himself owing to political considerations, but the local Democrats near Nauvoo allowed the rumor to be circulated that, should the Mormons persevere in

their intention of voting for Walker, the militia would certainly be sent against them. There was a considerable amount of bargaining between the Mormons and the Democratic managers with the result that the Mormon vote, on what the sect believed to be a pledge of immunity from further persecution, was transferred to Hoge, who was elected to Congress by 600 or 800 majority. It was at this same election in the Quincy district that Douglas was sent to Congress for his first term although in that district the Mormons, not having had time to receive word of the change in the policy of their leaders in favor of the Democrats, voted for Douglas's opponent. He was now in a peculiar and embarrassing position, since he was face to face with an important and influential group in the community who had opposed his own election but who had been responsible for the choice of a Democrat in another district. They were at least potentially Democratic voters and decidedly difficult to control. In Douglas's second candidacy for Congress two years later the Mormons were friendly to him rather than otherwise, and it would appear that he received a substantial number of votes from them. Early in 1844, Judge Ford, who was then in charge of the ninth circuit, was nominated for the governorship by a little group of Democrats who were practically in control of the state organization. While Douglas had bent the knee to Mormonism, Ford had not, and in his later *History of Illinois* he did not hesitate to criticize Douglas in unmeasured terms for his

action in deferring to the sectaries. Douglas apparently had no objection to Ford as governor: he rather approved of the choice, as a clever ruse designed to win the support of those elements in the party which had been antagonized by his own friendliness to the Mormons.

The attitude of the Mormons toward the people of the state had not been at all improved. Friction had continued and the apparent success of Smith in resisting arrest rendered them more and more assertive with regard to their own powers of self-government. Stolen property taken into Nauvoo could seldom be recovered, owing to the composition of the courts in the "holy city," and the effort of the two political parties to gain Mormon support rendered both of them unwilling to take any very positive step. In the spring of 1844, Joseph H. Smith announced himself as a candidate for the presidency of the United States and at about the same time set up a much more elaborate and powerful religious hierarchy. Numbers of missionaries were sent out to preach the Mormon religion, and thus to political, legal and other difficulties were added the prejudices growing out of sectarianism. The situation became so strained as practically to lead to a threat of genuine war and the demand of the public that the Mormons should leave the state with as little delay as possible became insistent. Things reached a crisis about the beginning of 1846, when the people near Nauvoo determined to drive the Mormons out of the country. Governor Ford sent a body, con-

sisting of about 450 men, toward Nauvoo for the purpose of arresting the Mormon leaders. The force was under the command of John J. Hardin, Douglas's sometime bitter opponent and political rival, as colonel, while Douglas himself held a post as major. As it approached Nauvoo, it encountered a force of about 4,000 Mormons, well armed and drawn up to oppose further advance. It was evident that in the event of actual conflict the Mormons would easily gain the victory. Hardin naturally saw the wisdom of avoiding an open breach and determined to send Douglas to Nauvoo for the purpose of arresting the twelve apostles of the church. He told Douglas to take a guard of 100 men and proceed at once to the town. Douglas, however, dreaded the consequences of any such effort; he, therefore, begged Hardin to change his order and to send him alone as a personal ambassador for the purpose of discussing the question of the removal of the apostles.[1] Hardin finally reconsidered his original order and Douglas started at once, without any attendants, for Nauvoo. The Mormon forces, seeing him approach alone, had no hesitation in allowing him to pass through their lines. Indeed, they sent an escort with him to the city, where he succeeded in persuading the twelve apostles to accompany him to the militia camp for the purpose of talking over the situation. As soon as they arrived, negotiations were begun and terms, under which the Mormons should withdraw from the state, were finally worked

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 52.

out, but proved unacceptable to some of the principal factors in the Mormon hierarchy. Douglas, however, was successful in finally holding them to the chief points in the arrangement and it was agreed that they should withdraw. The outcome was regarded as a great triumph for Douglas,[1] but Governor Ford and other Democrats were not inclined to assign him the same amount of credit. They took the view that the Mormons had already practically determined to go on the ground that "the kind of Mahometanism which they sought to establish could never be established in the near vicinity of a people whose morals and prejudices were all outraged and shocked by it."[2] Linn, the faithful historian of the Mormons, finds that "they had begun arrangements to remove from the county before the recent disturbances, 1,000 families, including the heads of the church, being determined to start in the spring without regard to any sacrifice of their property."[3]

Whatever was the influence of Douglas in this particular incident, it is clear that his work was unqualifiedly on the side of order and in the direction desired by the bulk of the non-Mormon inhabitants of the state notwithstanding that, as always in the past, he took pains to avoid unnecessarily antagonizing the intruders. He of course could hardly have foreseen the growth of the sect in power and influence during later years, yet he for a time continued his pleasant relations with the Mormon

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, pp. 52–53. [2] Ford, *History*, p. 411.
[3] Linn, *Story of the Mormons*, *ante cit.*, p. 340.

leaders, and presented a memorial in the shape of an application for Utah's admission as a state subsequent to the final settlement of the sect in that territory.[1] Several years later, when Douglas was looking hopefully to the presidential nomination and election, he devoted not a little attention to the Mormon question, dealing with it in a speech at Springfield, Ill., on June 12, 1856. He then declared that reports from the Mormon territory seemed to justify the belief that nine-tenths of its inhabitants were aliens and that "all were bound by horrid oaths and penalties to recognize and maintain the authority of Brigham Young."[2] "I think it is the duty of the President," said he, "as I have no doubt it is his fixed purpose, to remove Brigham Young and all his followers from office, and to fill their places with bold, able and true men; and to cause a thorough and searching investigation into all the crimes and enormities which are alleged to be perpetrated daily in that territory under the direction of Brigham Young and his confederates; and to use all the military force necessary to protect the officers in discharge of their duties and to enforce the laws of the land. When the authentic evidence shall arrive, if it shall establish the facts which are believed to exist, it will become the duty of Congress to apply the knife and to cut out this loathsome, disgusting ulcer."[3] The condition

[1] Linn, *ante cit.*, p. 430.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 476–477.
[3] Speech given in full, New York *Times*, June 23, 1856, quoted by Linn, p. 477.

of the Mormons after they reached Utah was perhaps not worse than it had been while they were still at Nauvoo, and their character as an element in the national constituency was perhaps not more seriously objectionable than it had been while they were still merely an element in the state constituency. But presidential candidates necessarily take a different point of view from that of state politicians and Douglas had traveled a long way during the ten years after 1846. His position with respect to the Mormons so long as they were residents of Illinois had, in fact, been almost purely political. He had clearly recognized the influence that these fanatics exercised in the doubtful counties where the balance between Whig and Democrat might readily be turned either in one direction or the other. His subsequent sympathy with the Mormons after they had moved from the state and had settled in Utah was possibly only a reminiscence. At all events the friendliness for Mormonism with which Douglas had often been charged was merely friendliness for a body of voters, and his position in 1856 was doubtless truly representative of his own attitude on the question.

It does not appear that Douglas's course with regard to Mormonism brought him into any local disfavor. Ford and other partisan writers evidently regard his conduct as unprincipled, while the devoted biographers like Sheahan treat it as simply an exhibition of tact and courage rather than as involving any political or moral blame. The fact that

the Mormons finally left Illinois, as had been earnestly desired, and that they were evidently and undoubtedly furthered in this intent by Douglas, who had manifestly become convinced that they presented too serious a local problem, resulted in the closing of the incident so far as state politics were concerned; while it was not until after Douglas had passed from the national stage that Mormonism really became a sufficient factor in national politics to call for definite governmental action. The Mormons served the purposes of Douglas during the troubled years when he was passing from his secretaryship of state to his place on the bench, and from that again to his membership in Congress. Having answered that purpose, Douglas, now firmly established at Washington and a figure of state importance, could afford to discard them and was undoubtedly glad when their removal westward relieved him of an embarrassing entanglement.

CHAPTER IV

CONGRESSIONAL APPRENTICESHIP

DOUGLAS was now to enter upon a much larger field than any in which he had yet appeared. Thus far his experience had been solely that of the local politician. The two experiences with the law—one as prosecuting attorney, the other as judge of the Supreme Court—had been mere interludes in a purely political career. Neither had given him any opportunity for reading, and the active life that he had led had not been such as to afford much leisure for serious attention to the study of history or the broader aspects of public questions. The reading he had done had been incidental, hasty, and planned merely for the purpose of meeting an immediate emergency, such as the preparation of a speech, the drafting of a political address, the writing of a vehement newspaper article or some equally transitory production.[1] It was thus a grave ques-

[1] "Judge Douglas wrote little, but suggested much. His mind teemed with 'points.' I never spent an hour with him which did not furnish me with new ideas. He grasped and understood most questions thoroughly. When he read was always a mystery. Social to a degree, driving out almost daily when not entertaining his friends at his own hospitable home, visiting strangers at their hotels, leading in debate or counseling in committee, he was rarely at fault for a date or a fact. He was a treasure to an editor, because he possessed the rare faculty of throwing new light upon every subject in the shortest possible time." Forney, *Anecdotes of Public Men*, p. 21.

tion whether the arts of the local frontier politician would serve to advance Douglas upon the wider stage to which he had gained access. He himself entertained few doubts upon the subject and allowed none to appear. His first entry into the House of Representatives took place in December, 1843, and, as usual, with true intuition, he sought for an opportunity to catch public attention and place himself in the centre of a group or movement which would recognize him as its spokesman. There was at that time no public question prominently before Congress with which he was personally and closely familiar. The usual delay in developing a program characterized the opening of a session which, as a matter of fact, turned out to be tolerably quiet and untroubled. Douglas would probably not have sought to attract general attention by discussing in public any subject of which he was obviously ignorant, for he himself was far too astute to trade upon an undue ignorance on the part of others. Like many a new congressman just come to Washington, he therefore sought to make the subject of his first speech a topic of personal political interest likely to be understood by, and to appeal to, a body of men throughout the country, and calculated to arouse strong partisanship for and against the views advanced by the speaker. For this purpose a most favorable opening shortly presented itself.

General Jackson, during his defense of New Orleans, had been fined $1,000 by a judge in that city for acts connected with the performance of his

duties. Jackson paid the fine but later sought to induce Congress to refund it to him. A bill for that purpose had been pending intermittently for some time but had never been passed. Sheahan[1] says that it had been considered by "some of the best minds in Congress," although he does not tell who they were. The bill was one of those measures that are frequently offered by personal or partisan adherents who wish to compliment a public man, or furnish a bone of contention that may be used to wrangle over during the intervals between real acts of legislation. This old bill was reintroduced at the session of 1843–1844, and again served its former purpose. The usual eulogies upon Jackson were offered and the usual controversial discussion was indulged in. It was in fact merely an opportunity for "oratory," being supported only, as even Sheahan admits (and as the record shows), "by its friends." This was an unexpectedly good opportunity for Douglas. He had always been known as a Jackson man; and, as has been seen when reviewing his early history,[2] had on various occasions delivered himself of the sophomoric rant in eulogy of the general that is familiar in school and college debating societies. Later on he had found it convenient to accept the position of a strong pro-Jackson leader in Illinois.[3] He had probably followed and analyzed the career of Jackson, particularly its later phases, with as much attention as he had bestowed upon that of any public man. The bill to re-

[1] *Life*, p. 60. [2] See *ante*, p. 15. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

fund the $1,000 was therefore an exceptional opportunity for a maiden speech. Much old material could be used, and there was a chance for a great deal of fire and fury.

Douglas, more fortunate than congressmen of the present day, had no difficulty in obtaining the floor, and on the 7th of January, 1844, undertook to present his views upon the Jackson bill.[1] The real substance of his argument was merely, first, that in declaring martial law, General Jackson, while at New Orleans, had acted in an entirely legal way, and that, secondly, even conceding that his action was illegal and unconstitutional, the local court had had no authority to condemn him for contempt of court. No act really done by General Jackson had ever been pointed to in specific terms as illegal or improper in such a sense as to constitute a contempt of court. Therefore there was no justification for the verdict and the least that could be done was to refund the money paid in consequence of the fine imposed upon him. There was nothing particularly novel in this "legal" argument, for it had been advanced on various occasions in the past. Douglas perhaps put it somewhat more pointedly and freshly than ever before. It was not, however, the quality of the argument, but the character of the appeal which at once made Douglas a figure of some note.

Adams's often quoted account of the speaker re-

[1] Douglas's speech is found in the *Globe*, 28th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 112 *et seq.*

mains the best and most graphic picture of the newly-elected legislator. His caustic criticism, however, was tempered by a note of appreciation. Adams admitted that the speech was eloquent though sophistical, while he noted as a further ground for disliking it that it was admired by the "slave Democracy." There was in fact little real merit in the effort. In rhetorical turgid language, Douglas sought to appeal to the strong pro-Jackson feeling throughout the country and in closing drew a melodramatic picture of the appearance of the "hero of New Orleans" before the judge who would have sent him "to his grave branded as a criminal." The real success of the effort was in fact largely found in certain passages which Adams with keen insight had noted as appealing to the states' rights sentiment. For this Douglas was almost immediately taken up by the Southern Democrats. An aftermath of the speech came shortly after the adjournment of Congress at a political convention in Nashville, Tenn., whither Douglas went with other Illinois delegates to attend the meeting. According to the later partisan legend, however, the occasion was to him more in the nature of a political pilgrimage than the sober work of a routine elective gathering. He wished to see Andrew Jackson personally. Jackson, like more recent politicians, was quite willing to receive the predetermined homage of the well-disciplined pilgrims who had been marshaled before the doors of the "Hermitage." The house was thrown open and the usual "countless multi-

tude" filed through the front hallway, inflicting upon the retired statesman the customary hand-shaking suffering. It was hard for Douglas to reach the door. The strain of the convention and the difficulty of struggling through the crowds had exhausted him, and his paleness and apparent weariness were noticeable. Still a very young man and not yet as massively built as in later life, one observer noted that he looked "small and plain . . . beside the hundreds of robust and gallant specimens of Tennessee manhood." [1] By one of those fortunate coincidences, likely to occur in well-regulated political lives, Douglas had at his side a faithful newspaper correspondent at the moment when he approached General Jackson and it is to the account of this eye-witness that much of the description of the incident is attributable. According to this correspondent, Mr. Walters, the editor of the Illinois *State Register*, General Jackson "raised his still brilliant eyes and gazed for a moment in the countenance of the judge, still retaining his hand." After inquiring whether Douglas was the author of the speech in the House of Representatives and receiving an affirmative reply, Jackson said: "Then stop, sit down here beside me. . . . You are the first man that has ever relieved my mind on a subject which has rested upon it for thirty years. . . . Throughout my whole life I never performed an official act which I viewed as a violation of the Constitution of my country; and I can now go down to

[1] Quoted by Sheahan, *Life*, p. 70.

the grave in peace. . . ." Douglas, according to the dramatic observer, was not able to accept the invitation to be seated. He shook the hand of General Jackson "convulsively" and left the hall. Touching as was the regard for the Constitution exhibited both by Jackson and by Douglas, the description raises some doubt with reference to the circumstances surrounding the meeting. But whatever they were, the endorsement of Jackson stood Douglas in excellent stead, and in the autumn he found himself reëlected by a substantial majority.

Meanwhile the support which he had afforded to the bill for reimbursing Jackson was not the only work performed by him during the session. In the assignment of members to committees, the most important place that had fallen to him was that upon the Committee on Elections. The usual number of contested questions relating to elections had been presented and conspicuous among them was one of some general interest. There had recently been a reapportionment of representation in Congress, but in spite of the act dealing with that subject,[1] it had failed to receive observance in four states. The problem presented was whether the members from such states could be chosen *en bloc* or whether they must be selected in "districts composed of contiguous territory equal in number to the number of representatives." The question was important from a party standpoint, because nearly all of the members, some twenty-one in number, who had thus been erro-

[1] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, Vol. V, p. 490 (1842).

neously chosen were Democrats, while the majority of the House was Democratic. A failure to act in regard to the matter would be a permanent discredit to the party and might serve as a dangerous precedent. The result was the selection of a special committee, consisting of six Democrats and three Whigs, charged with the duty of investigating the legitimacy of the election in question. In appointing the committee, search was made for earnest party men who had demonstrated their shrewdness in times of political pressure at home. Among such a body of men it was not strange to find Douglas. Though a new member, he was chosen to draft the majority finding, which, it was a foregone conclusion, would be as favorable as possible to the status of the contested Democratic seats. Douglas's report must have fulfilled the expectations of the party. He pronounced the enactment requiring the choice of representatives by districts to be invalid and unconstitutional, unless accepted by the states and by them reënacted into local law. The power to prescribe the methods of electing its members under the Constitution undoubtedly could be exercised by Congress but only in the event that state legislative action was absent or was obviously unconstitutional.

This remarkable report was, not unexpectedly, received with vigorous criticism. Adams in commenting upon Douglas's defense of the position taken, said that "at the House Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, the author of the majority report from

the Committee on Elections, had taken the floor that evening, and now raved out his hour in abusive invectives upon the members who had pointed out its slanders, and upon the Whig party. His face was convulsed, his gesticulation frantic, and he lashed himself into such a heat that if his body had been made of combustible matter it would have burnt out. In the midst of his roaring, to save himself from choking, he stripped off and cast away his cravat, unbuttoned his waistcoat, and had the air and aspect of a half-naked pugilist." [1] The unfavorable attitude of opponents, the criticisms of the punctilious Adams and the manifest impropriety of bringing into Congress this body of illegally elected members were, however, considerations insufficient to offset the manifest advantage which would accrue to the party from the acceptance of the report framed by the majority.

Douglas, moreover, felt the necessity common to all new congressmen not only of working for the party in the national field, but also of getting some direct recognition from the public treasury for his constituents. His previous experience in pushing local river and harbor improvements, and in spreading the craze for internal development which was still prevalent in the West, naturally turned his attention to these subjects in the Federal arena. While he did not succeed in obtaining the exorbitant appropriation for the Illinois River which he

[1] *Memoirs* of John Quincy Adams, edited by Charles Francis Adams, 1876, Vol. II, pp. 510–511.

demanded, the item asked for being dropped from the bill, he was able by his oratory to attract considerable attention to himself at home and to impress his constituents firmly with the idea that he was strongly devoted to their interests. Not only in regard to internal improvements, but in other matters too, Douglas's early years in Congress showed a nice recognition of the necessities of his constituents. On one occasion an earnest effort to secure the passage of a bill for the purchase of 1,500 copies of Somebody's "History of Oregon" called forth the caustic comment of Adams and threw light upon the methods by which the young legislator managed to retain the good graces of his constituents and others.[1]

The first session, at all events, though productive of nothing more than the biassed speech-making and repulsive drudgery of a well-bitted party hack, demonstrated that Douglas could fit into a very definite niche in Washington, just as he had done in Illinois. Thus far he was of the type which the leaders, even at the present day, recognize as one that will "stand without hitching"—always reliable in partisan matters and possessed of sufficient shrewdness to cover any defects of knowledge. To many, however, Douglas's methods and manners were repellent. Lincoln's earlier description of him, couched in suggestively ambiguous language, as "the least man I ever saw," was now still about as valid as in 1835 when it had first been given, and

[1] Adams's *Memoirs*, Vol. XII, p. 154.

the habits which are termed "convivial" by courteous biographers were by this time tolerably well established.[1] Douglas, however, had not yet become well accustomed to the life of Washington, nor had he seen enough of men and methods anywhere to enable him to mitigate the crudities of his style and his attitude, which constituted so serious a hindrance to his advancement. At the close of his first long session of Congress, with the endorsement of General Jackson and his triumphal reëlection in prospect in the near future, as well as with the substantial approval of the party leaders, it was still questionable whether he could advance himself to the higher levels of political management.

Douglas had hardly expected the nomination of Polk for the presidency, and it is probable that it was not altogether acceptable to him. As a good party man, however, he had nothing to say in criticism of the selection, and speedily became a warm supporter of the national ticket, not only from the standpoint of the platform which the convention had adopted, but also in a personal way, offering Jacksonian compliments to Polk upon the floor of Congress and eulogizing him at party gatherings. The election of Polk in the autumn of 1844, shortly after Douglas's own reëlection, placed him in a favorable position as a strong administration Democrat of rec-

[1] "Judge Weldon remembers that he was once in Mr. Douglas's room at Springfield when Lincoln entered, and, following the custom, Mr. Douglas produced a bottle and some glasses and asked his callers to join him in a drink." W. E. Curtis, *True Abraham Lincoln*, p. 380.

ognized utility, if not of undoubted talents. The short session of Congress, completing the first term for which Douglas had been elected, opened in December, 1844, and presented some questions of a considerable interest. Conspicuous among these was the now threatening problem of the annexation of Texas and the war which, it was already foreseen, might grow out of it. The national Democratic convention had placed the annexation of Texas upon the same basis as the problem of the Oregon Territory. The issue had figured to some extent in the campaign; there had at least been no definite popular declaration against the annexation of Texas. Polk urged annexation from the outset, alleging this to be his duty because of the popular mandate he had received. With the question thus forced to the front in a large national way and with his own personal endorsement of Polk in mind, Douglas's tendency toward the annexation policy, despite its inevitable conflict with most of the theories of states' rights and the like, for which he had previously stood, was rapid.

In the new Congress, opening in December, 1844, he had been recognized by two good committee appointments, being given places on the Judiciary Committee and on the Committee on Elections. Without a commanding position in either, however, it was necessary for him to adopt some other method than faithful service, if he desired to become a man of prominence without delay. Having definitely accepted the leadership of Polk, he could not do

better, it seemed, than become a pro-administration exponent in the lower chamber. Anticipating the action of Congress, he introduced resolutions providing for the annexation of Texas which he advocated in season and out of season. The effort to secure attention, however, fell flat. Not Douglas's resolutions, but others in process of formulation by the older and wiser heads of the party, were those which gained acceptance as a basis for discussion. He had in fact made a serious error. The effort to get the lead with his resolutions providing for the annexation of Texas would probably have been unobjectionable, although the older members would still have persisted in retaining for themselves the prominence which they conceived to be their just due as promoters of the movement. In addition to this, Douglas had committed the plain blunder of forcing to the front the slavery question in an unnecessary way, by providing that the boundary established by the Missouri Compromise should be extended through Texas. This alone would have rendered his proposal impossible and the fact was early recognized. When a new form of resolution for the annexation of Texas was reported by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, it became known that Polk had given this proposal his endorsement, so that it was emphatically the administration measure.

The result, of necessity, was that Douglas found himself blocked in his effort at self-advancement and, unwilling to appear as the leader of a separate section of the administration forces, he now dropped

his own scheme and turned heartily to the support of the new plan. Securing recognition by the Speaker, after some delay, he devoted his principal attention to an attack upon the New England men who were antagonizing the resolution, and delivered a speech in which he contended that a distinction must be drawn between the power of Congress to admit new states and its power to annex territory. His main point here was found in the thesis that the admission of the state was impossible save with annexation as a preceding step. The speech also was characterized by a rampant imperialism; it was evidently intended as an appeal to those who were already urgent that the United States should seize the whole of the North American continent. But Douglas's style had not improved materially since his first appearance on the floor and Adams, ever critical of the young frontiersman, characterized him cleverly enough when he wrote in his diary that "Douglas of Illinois raved an hour about democracy and Anglo-phobia and universal empire."[1] Douglas, in fact, distinctly advocated the expulsion of Great Britain from North America, and the extension of the annexation policy northward as well as southward.

While he had discarded his early design to impose a slavery discussion upon Congress in connection with the annexation of Texas, seeing the unwillingness of the administration to open the vexed issue, the suggestion which he had offered had not

[1] Adams's *Memoirs*, Vol. XII, p. 159.

gone astray. Southern men were urgent that the question should be settled, and settled by permitting distinctively Southern states that might be formed out of the new territory to enter the Union as slave states if they so desired. Douglas suggested that in the event of states being formed out of the new territory north of the line established in the Missouri Compromise, slavery should be prohibited in such commonwealths. This final agreement was substantially the idea which had been brought forward in Douglas's early resolutions about annexation. The conditions under which the modification had been made, and the final form given to the clause, however, were not favorable to Douglas's claims for credit either with Southern or with Northern men. He emerged from the Texan discussion with relatively little added reputation. So low an estimate does Douglas's own personal biographer put upon the achievements of his hero during the session of 1844-1845, that he devotes almost no attention to it. The first skirmish over the Texas question had, however, a special significance. This lay in the fact that Douglas had now come, though incidentally only, face to face with the issue which colored all his later career, and which furnished the inspiration for most of his important public debates. Slavery changed the whole current of his life and while the subject gave him the opportunity for some of his most brilliant successes, it also exposed him to his most serious inconsistencies and opened the way to his worst defeats.

There is no evidence that Douglas was naturally predisposed to the support of slavery. On the contrary, his training, his traditions, his whole early career, were hostile to it. He had been allied neither with slavery advocates nor with the owners of slaves. He had never owned slaves himself, and the sentiment of his immediate environment had undoubtedly been antagonistic to the institution. The circumstances that made Douglas appear as an advocate of slavery throughout almost the whole of his congressional career were two-fold.

He was above all things a partisan Democrat. As such he had the feeling of all partisans that nothing must be done to disrupt or weaken the organization of which he was in charge, or whose fortunes he was endeavoring to promote. Just as he had sought to gain the aid of the Mormons by favoring their peculiar ideas and institutions, so he sought to make to the Southern interests in Congress those concessions which he believed were necessary to satisfy them and to keep them harmoniously united with the Northern branch of the Democratic party. He saw the South a solid, compact body, held by the common tie of the institution of slavery. He saw the Northern Democrats united by no such common bond and influenced, if at all, only by general principles, in opposing slavery. Scantily trained in history or in general political theory, Douglas had not the knowledge or the insight to appreciate the significance of slavery as an historical institution. From the economic standpoint, he was largely

or wholly untrained, and he scarcely comprehended the bearing of the question upon the industrial development of the United States. There is every reason to think that Douglas's attitude toward slavery therefore when he first came to recognize it as a definite force in politics, was one of pure opportunism. Always lacking in the idealistic instincts which lead some men to devote themselves to a cause for its own sake, Douglas had from his earliest years been a strictly practical politician. In every way, he felt impelled toward those courses which would best advance his own interests. In thus acting with reference to the slavery question, he might easily find a basis of justification in the fact that slavery actually existed, in the fact that its eradication or suppression would involve a tremendous conflict, and in the general hopeful philosophy which was inclined to leave the subject to the future in the confidence that it would ultimately work out its own corrective. From all these standpoints, there was every reason why Douglas should stand ready to accept, up to a certain point, the dictation of the strongest element in his party, and should yield his assent to plans and proposals which under other circumstances he would probably have antagonized.

The second important influence which tended to affect the life of Douglas in reference to the slavery question is seen in his own personal relationships. Douglas early in his congressional career was thrown with slaveholders of the gentle and

patriarchal type, to whom the welfare of the human property entrusted to their care was one of the most serious duties of existence. He had not become convinced of the fundamental and vital character of the slavery question at the time of his first marriage in 1847. True, Illinois had been slave ground in the territorial days, and even at that time the issue was important.[1] Although the state came into the Union in 1818 without slavery, the institution existed there for a time and then, in theory at least, was driven out. Indentured negroes, who were practically slaves, continued to be held in servitude,[2] but they were not numerous and their condition was not very unfortunate. There had been a slow growth of anti-slavery sentiment in Illinois from 1830 to 1840 but progress toward Abolitionism or anything approaching it had been exceedingly slight. Not long after Douglas first went to Congress, he made the acquaintance of the lady who was to become his first wife, Miss Martha Denny Martin. Her father, Colonel Robert Martin, owned a substantial tract of land in North Carolina with an adequate force of slaves, besides 150 or more

[1] "The legislatures of the Indiana and Illinois Territories had passed laws allowing a qualified introduction of slavery. . . . It had been enacted that emigrants to the country [Illinois] might bring their slaves with them, and if the slaves, being of lawful age to consent, would . . . voluntarily sign an indenture to serve their master for a term of years, they should be held to a specific performance of their contracts. . . . Such slaves were then called indentured and registered servants; the French negroes were called slaves. Many servants and slaves were held under these laws." Ford, *History of Illinois*, p. 32.

[2] Moses, *History of Illinois*, Vol. I, p. 314 *et seq.*

slaves upon a Mississippi plantation. During his courtship, Douglas visited the North Carolina plantation and there he saw slavery at its best. His bent was already friendly to the Southern slaveholders, and it was now to become still more so by reason of circumstances. His father-in-law's death within a year after the marriage threw a quantity of valuable property, whose worth was dependent upon slave labor, into the hands of his wife. Recognizing the political unwisdom of such action, Douglas declined to accept the direct ownership of the slaves and the plantations, but the fact that the financial welfare of his family was thus so intimately bound up with the continued successful maintenance of a slave system of labor, could hardly have operated otherwise than to make him friendly to the existence of the institution. Though his wife lived for but six years, his children's pecuniary interests and the growing connection between himself and the Southern party in Congress, had by that time definitely moulded his attitude toward the question.

It would be wrong to suppose, however, that Douglas ever distinctly advocated the slave system. There is more than a little evidence that he regretted its existence, although in common with many high-minded Southerners he thought it neither possible nor feasible to attempt any immediate change. His doctrine that the people of every community should determine their own relationship to the question was a natural outgrowth of his general states' rights and democratic ideas. It

would probably have been better for him, in the sight of his contemporaries,—better, too, from the standpoint of his historical status, had he not married the daughter of a Southern slave-owner and become the father of slave-owning children. It was not an unfair inference for party opponents to draw that these connections influenced him in his public life, even though there were many others, following the same path as Douglas, who were entirely free from any suspicion of personal interest.

Douglas's relationship to slavery may perhaps be fairly divided into three periods: the first embracing his early legislative career, which we have already traced, and covering the time of his courtship and first marriage, during which he was perhaps more friendly to slavery as slavery than at any subsequent period; the second, extending from the passage of the legislation of 1850 to the close of the Kansas-Nebraska contest, which may be regarded as his period of constitutional support of the slavery cause; and the third, extending from the time of the Lecompton struggle in Kansas to his death, a period in which he manifestly underwent a course of development, carrying him away from the extremes toward which the slavery advocates were now tending, and in which he found himself in a state of revolt against the desperate measures of the Southern politicians. It is not inconceivable that, had his life been lengthened, Douglas would have appeared as the author of some plan for abolishing or limiting slavery in such a way as to dispose of the question with possibly

less harshness than was finally resorted to in the settlement of the great economic and political dispute.

Meantime the issue was only germinating. The territorial questions raised by the Mexican War and the annexation of Texas, must much more fully develop before the differences on the subject of slavery could become acute.

CHAPTER V

WAR AND SLAVERY

THE question of the relations of the United States with Mexico and Texas came into Congress in December, 1845. Hardly had the session begun, when Douglas placed before the lower chamber a joint resolution in which he called for the admission of Texas upon the same basis as the other states. Congress had now reached a point where it had, in its opinion, ascertained the feeling of the country sufficiently to act, and the House promptly passed the resolution which Douglas had proposed. This was in line with the Democratic platform of 1844, and coming from such a source cannot be regarded as a novel proposal. He, however, was responsible for the earnest pressing of the measure, and there is evidence that he always regarded the work done by him in behalf of Texan annexation as among his greatest accomplishments as a congressman. There was no delay in the Senate, and before the close of the year, on December 29th, the resolution had been accepted and had thus practically received the force of law.

The action taken meant war with Mexico as a matter of course. Information that Mexican troops had passed the border and had invaded the United

States, was conveyed to Congress by President Polk on May 11, 1846—the culmination of a long and entangled, but fruitless, series of negotiations. He asked for a sufficient body of volunteers to repel the movement. There was already pending before the lower chamber a bill which had been drafted and reported by the Committee on Military Affairs on the 27th of January preceding. This bill had been shaped with a view to possible aggression on the part of Mexico, and action on it was now demanded. The measure was promptly passed. It authorized the enlistment of 50,000 men beside appropriating $10,000,000. This at once opened the way for a debate involving the whole subject of policy with respect to foreign countries, and particularly with reference to the Mexican contest. In this Douglas took the lead.[1] His chosen biographer says that the speech which he delivered "was a most thorough vindication of the war and of President Polk's policy" and "was never surpassed." Without endorsing this view, it is undoubtedly the case that Douglas made himself almost indispensable to the administration, and powerfully forwarded a cause which might otherwise have encountered difficulties. He spoke in vigorous but sufficiently moderate terms of the insults to the United States which had been offered and the injury to American commerce which had

[1] *Congressional Globe*, 1st Sess., 29th Cong., pp. 815, *et seq.*, for debate, also Sheahan, *Douglas*, Chap. 5, for full extracts from Douglas's argument.

been inflicted by Mexico during the past fifteen years, while with respect to Texas he exculpated the United States for its action in connection with annexation on the ground that the reason for hostilities with Mexico had been brought into existence prior to annexation. The war was, therefore, a much larger matter than a mere struggle for territory. France had been treated in the same way and had declared her ultimatum from the deck of a man-of-war off Vera Cruz. Great Britain had also sent an ultimatum. Payment for damages had been made in both cases, but the United States had supinely refrained from taking any step. Mexico had dismissed our minister, and had permitted him to be robbed by highwaymen "according to the usage of the country." As for Texas, that state had become independent in 1827 and now simply desired to join the United States. Under a republican constitution, it was free and independent of the other united Mexican states and of every other foreign power, although in all matters relating to the Mexican confederation, it had delegated its powers to the general Congress of Mexican states. The republic of Texas held its position "by the same title that our Fathers of the Revolution acquired the territory and achieved the independence of this republic"—a successful revolution. We had received the republic of Texas, which had thus divorced itself from the Mexican confederation, into our Union as an independent and a sovereign state. We could not retreat were we so disposed. We

could not surrender a part of Texan territory since we had accepted the state with her whole territory. Nothing was to be done then, save to resist the aggression of Mexico and to insist upon the maintenance of the entire territory of the United States intact, including therein such land as Texas had acquired for herself and had brought into the Union of her own free will.

Not only did Douglas thus seek to vindicate the Mexican War by reasoning that followed practically the only available line along which success could be attained from any other than a mere partisan standpoint, but it was a notable feature of the debate that he succeeded in part in winning over the good opinion of his most notable opponent, John Quincy Adams, who but a short time before had spoken of him as a "homunculus," given to abusive and frantic ravings. Adams had contended that the western boundary of Texas was the Nueces River and not the Rio Grande. Douglas induced his dignified and venerable critic to commit himself definitely and positively to that opinion and then proceeded to refute the view expressed by Mr. Adams, basing his reply upon a dispatch which Mr. Adams himself had prepared about thirty years before while Secretary of State in President Monroe's Cabinet.[1] In this Mr. Adams had established conclusively that the Rio Grande was the western boundary of Texas and that the country between the

[1] *Congressional Globe*, 1st Sess., 29th Cong., p. 817, for speech; also Sheahan, Chap. 5.

Nueces and the Rio Grande was a part of Texas. Adams was fairly beaten by this ruse and frankly admitted his opponent's capacity, and in the main the courtesy and tact, which he had employed in the parliamentary struggle.[1] The speech and the Adams colloquy doubtless gave Douglas a decided increase of popularity and standing, and when he went to the White House, not long after the opening of the war, President Polk hastened to smooth over such irritation as Douglas felt because of political appointments to Federal places in Illinois, and practically designated him as the leader of the Democratic party in the lower chamber.[2]

The question now was the successful prosecution of the war. Polk needed aid in Congress, for he had to struggle not only with military problems, but also with those which surrounded the question of government in Texas. The President had gone on to establish a tentative administration in the new territory and this gave rise at the opening of the session, 1846–1847, to colloquies based upon the assumption that he had resorted to an excessive use of his power. Men looked to Douglas once more as the spokesman of the administration in matters relating to the war, and they were not disappointed. He had already been tutored by Polk, who had given him his side of the case at length. Douglas hastened to vindicate the position of the

[1] Sheahan, p. 74.

[2] Polk MS. Diary entry for June 17, 1846, quoted by Johnson, p. 106.

administration and drew still closer to the President. The question now was how to carry on the war, while at the same time looking forward to peace with Mexico. Polk thought that a transfer of $2,000,000 to pay Mexico for the ceded territory would be the best policy and in this Douglas concurred, although they knew that the appropriation would be far from easy to secure. Just at this juncture Douglas secured his election to the United States Senate, and entered that body with the intention of pursuing the same policy with reference to the war which he had already followed while a member of the lower chamber.[1] His advent upon the floor of the Senate was not characterized by the shrinking modesty enforced upon latter-day statesmen by the managers of the legislative organization in the "American house of lords," for the change was to Douglas nothing more than speaking at one end of the Capitol rather than at the other.

He opened his senatorial career on February 1, 1848, with a vigorous speech in which he once more sought to vindicate Polk and urged the adoption of an administration measure then pending in the Senate. This was called the "Ten Regiments Bill" and had been offered by Lewis Cass. Douglas had comparatively little to say about the bill itself, save incidentally, but devoted himself chiefly to the subject of the necessity of the war and its propriety from the abstract standpoint, at the same

[1] See page 102 for further description of circumstances surrounding election.

time also giving due attention to the boundary question. While Douglas was thus striving to vindicate a weak administration by denying facts which were known of all men, the feebleness of Mexico was contributing to bring about the speedy termination of hostilities. Our troops had had success in penetrating to the capital, and in holding most of the strong points that were needed to support the advance. The question of peace was under serious discussion, and a draft of a treaty had reached the Senate even while Douglas was still working for the Ten Regiments Bill. The treaty was in fact formally transmitted by the President on February 23, 1848, only about three weeks after Douglas had delivered his opening address on the floor. Discussions continued until March 10th, when a vote was taken, thirty-eight to fourteen, in favor of the treaty in the form in which it then stood. Douglas had voted against it, but there were not enough senators with him to make up the necessary one-third in opposition. It was a surprise to many during the days between February 23d and March 10, 1848, that he who had so vigorously upheld the administration in its Mexican policy now attacked it at a vital point. He disliked the boundary provision of the treaty[1] because, by providing that the line laid down in the agreement should be permanent, it cut off the possibility of a future rearrangement of the frontier. Such a rearrangement, Douglas apparently felt, might be necessary at a later date, but

[1] Sheahan. *Douglas, passim.*

his failure to support the Polk administration to the last was of comparatively little importance, since it was now considerably discredited in several directions, while Douglas himself had grown remarkably in power and influence since the opening of the war.

The question of territorial expansion, which had figured as one of the vital issues in the Mexican War, had also presented itself in a pressing form in connection with Oregon. While still in the House and still struggling with the Mexican question in its early stages, Douglas had bitterly assailed Great Britain because of her claim to Oregon, bringing forward the view that England should never be allowed to hold a single spot of territory in the Northwest.[1] He himself had introduced a measure, defining the legal status of the American inhabitants of the territory under the treaty which then existed with Great Britain. This treaty was to be abrogated and Douglas now urged that, in connection with such abrogation, we should insist upon absolute and full control of the whole Northwest. On the 27th of January, 1846, he demanded the adoption of his proposed policy, and insisted upon the maintenance of American power upon the Pacific with a view to the control of future trade. Continuing in this strain, Douglas found himself but one of ten who voted for a substitute resolution (offered in place of the resolution terminating the treaty with Great Britain), in which it was declared that Oregon was already defined in its status and

[1] *Congressional Globe*, 29th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 124, etc

could not be made the subject of controversy. The small number of supporters which he had succeeded in enlisting did not deter him from continued insistence upon the 54° 40′ line. He persevered in his demand, and when it was suggested a little later that Polk thought of settling with England upon the forty-ninth parallel as a boundary, he declared himself positively to the effect that the acceptance of such a settlement would be a violation of party pledges as embodied in the last Democratic platform. In fact, the advocacy of extreme views about Oregon carried Douglas into an almost ridiculous position even with his own political associates, although he succeeded in pushing through the House his bill relating to the settlers in the territory, which was later allowed to die quietly in the Senate.

The final draft of the treaty[1] was unsatisfactory to Douglas, particularly in view of the language employed in the President's message conveying to Congress the information that the treaty had been agreed upon.[2] Douglas felt the concessions to Great Britain to be a serious personal rebuke, but he could not urge warlike action at a moment when we were evidently on the point of hostilities with Mexico. Polk had urged that a territorial government be promptly established in Oregon, and Douglas was a sufficiently skilful tactician to drop such of his demands as were now plainly out of the question and take up the remaining issues. He pre-

[1] *Treaties in Force*, 1899, p. 231.
[2] *Messages and Papers*, Vol. IV, p. 449.

sented a measure establishing a government in Oregon and when adopted by the House, he admitted an amendment prohibiting the existence of slavery. This measure, however, like Douglas's other bill, went no further than the lower chamber, so that the incorporation of the anti-slavery provision was suggestive rather than actual for the time being. The Oregon question was now shelved for a while and not until Douglas himself had entered the Senate, the Mexican War having meantime passed by as a cause of alarm, was the discussion resumed. As soon, however, as conditions permitted, Douglas recurred to the Oregon question and early in 1848 he offered a measure establishing a regular form of rule in that territory. It was unfortunate that the issue had been so long deferred, for in the meanwhile the annexation of Texas and the question of its government had sharply brought to the front the problem of slavery. Few, if any, were so extreme as to suppose that slavery would flourish in the far Northwest, or that any declaration on the subject which might be embodied in the laws or constitution of Oregon, either as a territory or as a state, would be much more than an academic assertion of belief. While this was true, there was, however, a considerable distaste for any action which might be held to establish a precedent, to govern later policy in connection with other territories that might apply for admission. Many such territories were now in sight, and their entry into the Union was certain to raise the old question repeatedly. The subject was

at length referred to a committee, charged with the duty of investigating the whole territorial situation in the Northwest, and this committee finally offered a plan for the government not only of the Oregon territory, but also of New Mexico and California in respect to this topic.

The compromise proposal proved satisfactory in the upper chamber but the House would have nothing to do with it. Douglas had been willing to accept the scheme, although he had suggested certain amendments designed to carry the line of the Missouri Compromise through to the Pacific Ocean, and to place the restriction of slavery in Oregon upon the ground that it was north of the parallel of latitude which formed the southern boundary of Missouri. Polk desired the adoption of some such measure, but at the last Oregon was finally provided for in a bill which retained the clause restricting the introduction of slavery, while Douglas had the poor satisfaction of knowing that the plan as adopted was substantially the one for which he had stood while still a member of the lower chamber. The significant feature of the situation lay in the fact that controversy had now been definitely opened on the slavery question and that Douglas had assumed a positive attitude on that issue. He had in fact committed himself in a preliminary way to the policy which was later to cause him so much embarrassment, and ultimately to lead him into the mistake in his political career in connection with the Kansas-Nebraska question.

Before Douglas could go further in his study of national politics, however, he must take account of his position at home. He had in a measure antagonized the national administration, notwithstanding the earnest and valuable support which he had rendered; for Polk was not a sufficiently large man to allow much freedom to members of any party who might differ with him even in small particulars. Moreover, his status in Illinois was not altogether encouraging. The development of state politics had raised several serious questions, making it doubtful how men must shape their courses in order to maintain themselves at Washington. As has already been seen, Douglas had been sent to the Senate by action of the legislature late in 1847. His election had been effected as the result of a caucus in which there had been the usual display of irritation and friction growing out of the opposition of the older politicians, unable to agree among themselves and equally dissatisfied at seeing a younger man substituted. The candidacy of Douglas had been known in connection with the senatorship for a long time, but most persons had supposed he would be unable to attain his ambition. Success in this regard was therefore somewhat surprising at the particular juncture in question, and the charge was made that he had entered into a political bargain whereby a possible opponent was eliminated in return for a substantial Federal appointment. Douglas's elevation to the Senate at all events was unexpected and could not be said in any

sense to be the deliberate verdict of the people of the state, but rather a purely party matter. His problem, therefore, was that of identifying himself with the state as a whole more fully than he had been able to do while still representing only a part of it. If he wished to remain in the Senate, he must understand and accept the views of his constituency and definitely represent it. Meanwhile this constituency had been changing. The steady filling up of Illinois with eastern and northern emigrants and with the German element, which made its way across the Atlantic in consequence of the political disturbances in its native land, had made the vote there somewhat uncertain. It was no longer possible to determine accurately how the electorate would vote on any given question, nor was it certain that one man could fill and satisfy the ideals of the differing elements that existed in this new constituency. Douglas as a representative in Congress had reckoned cleverly and successfully with the pro-slavery element in the state, and as the Abolition element developed there he had made due allowance for it, though he still held it in but slight respect. He now saw it decidedly on the increase and was undoubtedly somewhat surprised at the action of the state in 1848 when a vote upon a constitutional provision prohibiting the entry of free negroes into Illinois territory resulted in a substantial ballot in favor of the entry of such negroes. Party lines were still very sharply drawn, however, and the Democrats had contrived to maintain their

ascendency successfully. The party had skilfully arranged and rearranged the congressional districts in such a way as to keep a majority of votes within its own hands, in most of them changing the lines as the incoming population threatened to alter the political complexion of any given district. Douglas's ability, his skill in manipulation, the fact that he had now risen to the highest Federal office in the gift of the state, marked him as its political leader *par excellence*. The retirement of his colleague, Senator Breese, shortly left him without a rival for the control of Federal appointments. It was necessary, however, to have a strong hold upon the national administration and to move, so far as possible, with the current of opinion.

Before leaving Washington after the struggle over the Mexican question, Douglas had done what he could to draw closer to the administration with which he had to some extent broken. He had even apologized to Polk in August, 1848, and had obtained promises of regard for his own wishes in local political matters. In apparent control of the party organization, sufficiently in favor with the national government to assure proper respect for his recommendations, it was only requisite that he should be sure of his ground on those broader questions involving slavery which, as he now recognized, were growing more and more acute. It was not possible ultimately to avoid the slavery question in some form, and this was keenly brought home to him when the Illinois legislature sought to instruct him

regarding his position on the subject. The presidential election in the autumn of 1848 had revealed a remarkable strengthening of the anti-slavery forces. Zachary Taylor, the Whig candidate, had received 1,360,000 popular votes, but Cass, whom the Democrats nominated, had 1,220,000, while Van Buren, running on a Free Soil ticket, received 291,000. Taylor's electoral vote was 163 against 127 for Cass, and Taylor consequently assumed office. The contest was very close in Illinois, where Cass, the candidate of the Democrats, had received only 56,300 votes as against 53,047 for Taylor.[1] The legislature was safely Democratic but the introduction of a resolution instructing the senators and representatives to use all possible means of an honorable character for giving the new territories a government free of slavery had been unexpected, and produced considerable confusion in the party.

Opponents of Douglas had noted with interest his inclination to compromise on the question of slavery, and so far as possible to regard the wishes of its Southern advocates. He had opposed the limiting clause on the ground that the territories should be left free to come into the Union without any restriction upon the subject of slavery, and his course had also been directly opposed to the imposition of slavery or the withholding of it, during the time that the territories were organized as such, through congressional enactments. For these reasons the action of the legislature might by some be con-

[1] Stanwood, *History of the Presidency*, p. 243.

sidered as a vote of lack of confidence in him, and under some conditions would probably have driven him out of office by a forced resignation. His efforts to accept the idea of the Missouri Compromise as applied to the new territories of the southwest and northwest were directly opposed to the ideas embodied in the resolution of the legislature of Illinois. This resolution had been passed by a combination of party groups, all of which were more or less opposed to slavery, and which included not a few Democrats. Democrats representing southern Illinois did not of course sympathize with these anti-slavery leanings and naturally voted against the resolution, but they were unable to control the legislature.

Douglas was now faced by an embarrassing alternative. Should he give up all that he had accomplished by his strenuous efforts,—the titular headship of the party in his state, his favorable standing at Washington, his new prominence in national affairs, and other achievements merely because of a scruple over his relation to local politics? He determined not to hand in his resignation but to accept, at least formally, the idea which had been conveyed in the resolution sent him by the legislature. He told the Senate that he would not resign because he thought the practical vote of lack of confidence in him was due to a fortuitous combination of opposing elements. The call, however, was for strenuous political labor designed to reëstablish his position in the state. Meanwhile, it was obvi-

ous that he must cease his advocacy of the precise policy toward the slavery question which the Illinois legislature had opposed. The question then would be whether during the next two or three years he could succeed in strengthening his foundations, and in setting himself four-square to the changing public opinion of his state. The course of political events justified his foresight, for within two years the shifting of party lines and the rapid development of new national issues altered the aspect of affairs. To this end, desirable as it was from his standpoint, Douglas vigorously contributed by effort to reshape the opinion of the state so as to lay greater stress upon the constitutional and legal side of the slavery question and less upon its moral or ethical aspects. Events showed that the conjunction of parties against him in the Illinois legislature had been a matter of chance and of shrewd political manipulation, partly growing out of the newness of his own leadership ; and, as the coalition against him proved its inability to hold together, he steadily consolidated his own local organization, aiding wherever possible the disintegration of the opposing groups. Threatening as it had seemed, the storm soon subsided and he emerged stronger than ever, because he was now fully warned of the dangers which confronted him.

CHAPTER VI

THE ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD

LIKE other members of Congress, Douglas had recognized the necessity of promoting the interests of his constituents in a definite and tangible way. Then, as now, the average voter was far from willing to take an active part in national affairs, and was most unwilling to put aside his own personal interests and needs in behalf of those of the country at large. This situation was recognized by Douglas very early in his political life; and throughout his subsequent career, while he was concentrating his mind largely upon national affairs and endeavoring to fight his way to the presidential chair, he was never without a distinct policy in regard to the economic questions which were closely and directly touched by Federal action. We have seen how, on the very threshold of his legislative life in the Illinois legislature, he had been confronted by the necessity of adopting a definite standpoint in regard to the use of state money for internal improvements and how, although setting his face against the wildest excesses of the internal improvement mania, he had seen the wisdom of voting for a bill which involved the state in most serious financial entanglements. The action then taken might well be over-

looked in any critical review of Douglas's career on the ground that he was a young man untrained in economic thinking, with his political future still to work out, and unable alone to withstand the strong current of popular sentiment.

The course of Douglas while a member of the Illinois legislature must, however, be regarded as merely the beginning of a definite and set policy with respect to the distribution of public funds, which was continued and expanded as he advanced more and more in Federal politics and became increasingly able to dictate legislation in Washington. Douglas's faithful biographer maintains that "during his entire political life" he "agreed with the Democratic party in resisting any general system of internal improvements by the Federal government." [1] Sheahan admits, that "upon some points, however, . . . he . . . had opinions somewhat peculiar." These peculiar ideas related to the promotion of works that were intended to develop commercial and transportation enterprises, and were disapprovingly directed only toward those works which were "asked for by parties having local interests to serve." [2] The question in what sense the term "local" is used by his biographer is one that might give rise to differences of opinion. Undoubtedly Douglas's action with reference to some of the most important commercial enterprises ever developed in the state of Illinois constituted one of the principal features of his public career, although one

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 354. [2] *Ibid.*

which has been regarded as largely incidental to his participation in the broad national questions centering around the slavery controversy. While Douglas, from the opening of his congressional service, recognized the political obligation, not to say the necessity, resting upon a young and rising politician of working actively for the usual river and harbor distribution of public moneys, the feature of his work which clearly distinguished him from the ordinary seeker after congressional grants was that he had the insight to take up, and the pertinacity to adhere to, a plan for a very large enterprise, which would be not only a permanent source of expenditure within his state but which would regularly divert to the pockets of a very large number of constituents some of the wealth of the Federal government, whether in the form of public lands (whose value he himself as a land officer had learned to know), or in some other form. He early attached himself therefore to the scheme for building a long line of railroad crossing the state of Illinois from north to south.[1] Thus he became one of the real originators of the great transportation system now controlled by the Illinois Central Railroad Company.

When Douglas entered the field of national politics in the autumn of 1843, he undoubtedly had carefully considered the projects of railroad development which were most in the public mind in Illinois. The idea of a line from the junction of the

[1] The history of Douglas's ideas is best given by Cutts, *Constitutional and Party Questions*, pp. 187–199.

Ohio and the Mississippi to some point on the Illinois River, and then north to Galena, had been talked of in the state for a good while, and its early beginnings are to be found in connection with the great and impracticable scheme for internal improvements for which Douglas himself had voted when he entered the legislature and which had broken down because of the lack of adequate state funds subsequent to the panic of 1837. This was accepted by Douglas as his leading proposal, and he soon had an opportunity of exhibiting his attitude, for the people of Illinois were now definitely looking to Congress as the available source of the aid which the state itself could not bestow.

Simultaneously with Douglas's entry into Congress, a bill was favorably reported in the Senate whereby a man named Holbrook was granted a right of way for a railroad through the public lands in Illinois. The railway was to be allowed to preëmpt the lands along the route at $1.25 per acre. This bill passed the Senate but failed of any action in the House,[1] and at the next session a similar bill, with some slight changes, was introduced but went no farther. Again in 1845–1846, a Senate bill granting to Illinois a large quantity of public lands located within the state for railroad construction was presented, but made no progress. The years 1843–1847 covered Douglas's career as a member of the lower house. During all this time he had been earnest in support of the general idea of the rail-

[1] Sheahan, p. 367.

road, but he had not cared to support the particular propositions which were then presented for discussion. Sheahan thinks that he would have opposed the original measure providing for preëmption at $1.25 an acre had it become a live issue in the House, and intimates that Douglas was largely responsible for its failure on the ground that he had no faith in Holbrook or his associates who, he thought, would simply take the grant and sell it to others. His idea was that the grant of lands should be made direct to the state, and this idea, as already noted, was embodied in the subsequent bill bearing on the subject. All of these manœuvres, however, came to nothing.

In the meanwhile Douglas had become more and more attached to a railroad scheme and, during his travels in Illinois just before taking his seat as senator, he spoke freely upon the question. Abandoning the idea of a direct grant to the state, as mentioned in the early Senate bills which had been framed somewhat along the lines he had suggested, he now advocated the gratuitous transfer to the railway of alternate sections of the public land on each side of the proposed railway, such grant, however, not to take effect until the road should be constructed. The scheme proved to be very popular and Douglas was more than ever confirmed in the idea that something should be done. In fact, he became so strongly interested in it, that, as the plan took form, he gradually enlarged it and finally, growing enthusiastic over the commercial possibili-

ties opening before him, he resolved to get for himself a share of the magnificent development which he believed would follow the construction of the line. He was now in a position where he could be of immense service in promoting the railroad plan. All the bills thus far had originated in the Senate, and that body had on the whole been the home of the internal improvement scheme in its various forms. Douglas's name, too, had acquired large prestige in Illinois, and it might safely be anticipated that any project in which he became interested would secure favor for that very reason.[1]

Before taking his seat in the upper chamber Douglas purchased Chicago real estate on a large scale. Johnson thinks his action was the result of "a sort of sixth sense" which enabled him to foresee "the growth of the ugly, but enterprising city on Lake Michigan."[2] Whether his action was due to a "sixth sense" or to a confidence in his own ability to shape things in such a way as to promote the development of Chicago, is a matter of opinion. Chicago was not yet included within the proposed railroad route but Douglas promptly set out to correct this defect. Immediately after his land purchases in Chicago, he took the view during the summer of 1847, that the line to be built must

[1] Forney, in his *Anecdotes of Public Men*, p. 19, recites instances of investments in Superior City, at Fond du Lac, the head of Lake Superior, at the terminus of the projected Northern Pacific Railroad made at the advice of Douglas and speaks of the large returns received therefrom.

[2] Johnson, *Life*, p. 169.

connect with the Great Lakes, and in support of this proposition he presented not only commercial considerations[1] but also arguments growing out of local politics.[2] Going to Washington in the fall of 1847, Douglas promptly introduced the bill. It provided for a grant to the state of Illinois of alternate sections of public land to aid in the construction of a railroad from Cairo to Galena, with a branch at some suitable point on the road to Chicago. This and rival bills were referred to the Senate Committee on Public Lands presided over by Douglas's own colleague, Breese of Illinois. Breese had been somewhat cold toward the scheme and had apparently been an advocate of the original group of railway promoters headed by Holbrook, who had sought to secure a preëmption privilege at $1.25 per acre. Douglas had already sounded Breese during the summer, but had found him in favor of the Holbrook scheme. Breese, however, had become convinced that he could not afford to exhibit undue partiality toward Holbrook, and he therefore reported both bills from the Committee on Public Lands. Douglas, in spite of the opposition of his colleague, which was manifest in a subdued way, succeeded in forcing his measure through the Senate but without effect, for near the end of the session the house laid it on the table by a small vote. The opposition was partly due to the hostility of the Southern states, but other states which had no public lands coöperated in antagonizing it.

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 368. [2] Johnson, *ante cit.*, p. 170.

Douglas had already told the Chicago men who were backing the scheme, that the votes of other portions of the country would have to be secured,[1] and he now proceeded to make practical use of an idea which had been neglected by other advocates of the plan and which he himself had not had the time to follow up. He believed that by forming an alliance with defunct or embarrassed railroad schemes in the Southern territory which the new road was to penetrate, or with which it was to connect he would be able to bring about a diversion in Congress which would give him the votes he required. The enterprise that he selected for the negotiation was the so-called Mobile Railroad. In the course of a visit to the plantation owned by his children, he went by a circuitous route to Mobile, and there he arranged a scheme which would result in a public land grant to the Mobile Railway, simultaneous with that to the Illinois Central, the votes of the advocates of both schemes being cast *en bloc*.

With this clever "deal" arranged, Douglas reintroduced his bill in December, 1849. Breese was now out of Congress and had been succeeded by Shields. Douglas, Shields, and the House delegation jointly drafted the measure and proceeded to push it. It was made public in January, 1850, but the pressure of the slavery question and the legislation relating thereto greatly hampered its progress.

[1] A letter written by Douglas to Breese and published in the Illinois State Register January 20, 1851, is relied upon to prove this point. See Johnson, *Life*, p. 170.

Enough was done, however, to make it evident that if any bill could be passed, it would be the Douglas bill and not that of the rival group of promoters. Recognizing their defeat, the Holbrook politicians and boomers hastened back to Illinois and there "by the most dexterous management" succeeded in inducing the legislature to pledge them any lands which might in future be granted by Congress to the state for the construction of the Illinois Central Railroad.[1] This apparently blocked Douglas's further progress, for the latest bill, which had been approved by all of the Illinois members, now provided solely for a single road—the Illinois Central. The scheme had undoubtedly been cleverly managed and there was the usual ignorance as to the methods by which Douglas and his political followers had been outmaneuvred.[2] However it had been done, no further progress could be made. It was evident, therefore, that a *coup* would be necessary. Boldly sending for Holbrook, the head of the rival group of boomers, Douglas now threatened him with publicity and the absolute ruin of his whole scheme unless he should assign every right and claim to congressional land grants. This release was to be made in favor of the state of Illinois. The facts as to Holbrook's machinations had apparently not become well known, and had only been discovered by Douglas in the course of a

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 369.

[2] Moses, *Illinois Historical and Statistical*, Fergus Printing Co., 1889, Vol. II, p. 574.

visit to Springfield in which he had happened to look into the text of a measure wherein the clause conveying the grant had been concealed. Holbrook became convinced that, with Douglas on guard at Washington, he could hope for nothing and being averse to the threatened publicity, he resolved to yield. He executed the desired release, which was then forwarded to Springfield and filed with the public papers. Satisfied on this point, Douglas pushed on with his effort to pass the measure.

The bill, whatever the inspiring motive, now at least presented the appearance of a grand conception —a line from the Great Lakes to the Gulf. There was the same reason for acting in the matter that existed in the case of the Pacific railways, and in addition there was the argument that by enabling the construction of this road, Congress would connect the Middle West with the South and Southwest in a way never before possible. A good deal of shrewd political bargaining was still necessary. Votes must be conciliated in the Eastern states, and appear to have been gained by promises either of tariff changes or aid in securing such changes, by glowing predictions of the benefits to come to Eastern roads by reason of the connection at Chicago with the Illinois Central and in other ways. In the South votes were obtained by urging the advantages that would accrue to that section in the shape of quick and cheap transportation, while the intervening states without public lands almost inevitably drew to the side of the plan, as they realized the

benefits that were likely to be gained from the construction of a road which would cost them nothing. The outcome of all this trafficking was clearly seen when the vote was taken on April 29th in the Senate, where the measure passed twenty-six to fourteen. It subsequently went through the House on the 17th of September by a vote of 101 to seventy-five. The result showed that Douglas had been unerring in his forecast of the support he could get by his manœuvring, for he had won over nearly twenty votes, which would otherwise have been against him and would have sufficed to defeat the measure ignominiously. Running through the debate were the usual florid utterances and the familiar vague prophecies of untold wealth and enormous commercial expansion to follow from the new enterprise.

The bill, however, had been passed and Chicago, the place of Douglas's new-made investments, was duly appreciative, offering to the two senators the customary "ovation." Work was immediately begun and the road shortly proved successful in many ways. The growth of Chicago was already in progress and Douglas's property was advancing in value. He profited materially from the development he had helped to bring about.[1] In his later political career

[1] Forney, *Anecdotes of Public Men*, p. 20, seems to feel that Douglas's work was not appreciated: "I say I could not help . . . drawing the contrast between the vital and vigorous championship of Douglas in this stupendous work and the studied neglect of his memory by those who have profited by it. After passing through the magnificent depot [Chicago] and the ad-

he received many favors from the Illinois Central Railroad, while the increased cost of political campaigning, which had to be met in 1858 from the candidate's own resources, was paid out of a fund of $80,000 borrowed by Douglas on the strength of his land holdings in or near Chicago. More than this had been borrowed by him at one time or another, but the fact that at a critical period he could secure so much upon his real estate shows how largely he had profited from the commercial growth of the city, now to be promoted by the construction of the railway and later by the development of trade which followed the completion of the work.[1] Douglas, moreover, in connection with the Illinois Central scheme, acquired a considerable degree of personal popularity with many of his constituents, and undoubtedly was well rewarded for all that he had attempted while in Washington by the growth of his prestige among business men.

Douglas's experience with the Illinois Central now practically committed him to the advocacy of similar schemes in all directions. A certain degree of consistency is necessary in public life, and

jacent buildings, I said to an employee, 'Who owns the most stock in the Illinois Central?' 'Indeed I do not know, sir,' was his reply. 'Well, my friend, I think the man who ought to own the most of it, and whose children should be most benefited by it, was Stephen A. Douglas.' I think the man may have heard of Douglas, but it was clear to me, from his look, that he thought I was a lunatic."

[1] The details about Douglas's use of these funds are supplied by Horace Greeley, *Century Magazine*, July, 1891, p. 375, quoted by Rhodes (with approval), *History*, Vol. II, p. 338.

it was the more requisite in this instance because of the bargains that had been made for votes during the struggle in behalf of this railroad. Douglas could not very well refuse his aid, or at least his countenance to the advocates of any proposed land grant that had the color of legitimacy, when only a short time before he had relied for support in behalf of his own project upon the votes of these same men or their immediate predecessors. In consequence, during the decade of his greatest prestige and prominence, he found himself constantly obliged to lend his favor to land grant propositions and in this way paid a heavy price for the aid he had obtained for the Illinois Central. Particularly in the Southwest was the pressure strongly felt, for this was the region to which Douglas had first appealed. He found himself obliged to vote at one time or another for land grant bills covering public property in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Missouri. From the middle western states, to which appeal had also been made, came similar pressure, and Douglas was compelled to vote in behalf of schemes affecting Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and possibly others.[1]

The most important subsequent development of Douglas's economic policy was seen, however, in his promotion of the Pacific railway movement. He was strongly actuated in this connection by the stand he had previously taken on the subject of the

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 371, summarizes these projects very briefly.

Illinois Central, although the influence here was less specialized than had been the case with the smaller land grants. Having accepted the general idea of national aid to great through routes designed to connect distant parts of the country with one another, and thereby to help in abolishing sectionalism, he could not turn a deaf ear to similar pleas. Morever, as time passed, it became plain that a western outlet for the commerce of Chicago would be quite as desirable as a southern trunk line. All of these considerations shaped his subsequent policy. When the Nebraska bill was in process of passage in the Senate, Douglas materially modified its form[1] in order to assure, if possible, a central route for the proposed railway to the coast.[2] In connection with the Pacific Railroad legislation itself, Douglas early committed himself to a favorable attitude, and went so far as to recognize and approve not one but three routes which later became substantially the lines across the continent. While, however, thus endorsing the scheme and occasionally making a declaration in favor of the general idea, Douglas never allowed himself to become an active promoter of these particular projects. The utmost that he did was to speak strongly in the Senate on April 17, 1858, in favor of the Pacific Railroad measure, providing that whenever a section of the road should be completed, the government might advance a certain amount of land and $12,500 per mile in bonds in order to enable the

[1] *Infra*, p. 193 n., etc. [2] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 372.

company to construct the next section. He then presented[1] the stereotyped arguments in favor of government aid to trunk-line railroads, urging the desirability of such roads for the transportation of military equipment in time of war, as economical avenues over which to carry the mails, as means of uniting the country in its various parts, and on other grounds. In this speech he perhaps gave the most accurate and clear-cut expression of his philosophy with reference to the support of internal improvements by the Federal government. "Some gentlemen," he said, "think it is an unsound policy leading to the doctrine of internal improvements by the Federal government within the different states of the Union. We are told we must confine the road to the limits of the territories, and not extend it into the states, because it is supposed that entering a state with this contract violates some great principle of state rights. Mr. President, the committee considered that proposition and they avoided that objection in the estimation of the most strict, rigid, tight-laced states' rights men that we have in the body. We struck out the provision in the bill first drawn, that the President should contract for the construction of a railroad from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean, and followed an example that we found on the statute book for carrying the mails from Alexandria to Richmond, Va.,—an act passed about the time when the resolutions of 1798 were passed, and the report of 1799 was adopted

[1] *Congressional Globe*, 1st Sess., 35th Cong., pp. 1643 *et seq*

—an act that we thought came exactly within the spirit of those resolutions. That act, according to my recollection, was, that the department be authorized to contract for the transportation of the United States mail by four-horse post-coaches, with closed backs, so as to protect it from the weather and rain, from Alexandria to Richmond, in the state of Virginia. It occurred to this committee that if it had been the custom, from the beginning of this government to this day, to make contracts for the transportation of the mails, in four-horse post-coaches, built in a particular manner, and the contractor left to furnish his own coaches and his own horses, and his own means of transportation, we might make a similar contract for the transportation of the mails by railroad from one point to another, leaving the contractor to make his own railroad, and furnish his own cars, and comply with the terms of the contract." [1]

The superficial point of view which could draw this analogy might perhaps be attributed to the entire lack of understanding of the position of railroads as common carriers, characteristic of most public men at the time this speech was delivered. It is difficult, however, to find anywhere in Douglas's speeches or writings a satisfactory reconciliation of his idea of government subsidies to private enterprises with the general philosophy of *laissez faire* and government non-interference, which is the controlling note in all of his other utterances.

[1] *Globe.*

Taken as a whole, it must be admitted that Douglas's career exhibits in the case of his pro-subsidy tendencies, one of those singular inconsistencies which must be ascribed to the direct pressure of immediate political or private interests upon the general trend of a public man's life.

With the acceptance of so extensive and important a general policy as that of government aid to trunk-line railroads, it was probably not hard for Douglas to unite a theory or policy of conduct which would permit him to work steadily and consistently for the usual petty distribution of public money involved in excessive river and harbor appropriations. Douglas was one of the original advocates of "systematic" river and harbor improvement. Sheahan admits that he voted pretty generally for "all the river and harbor appropriation bills" although he always protested "against such items, as were included in them, that did not come up to his idea of justice or propriety." Nevertheless, as a result of this policy he was "often compelled to vote for a number of small appropriations for what he deemed inappropriate works." [1] It was a remarkable fact that, in order to get rid of the system of log-rolling, whose evils he plainly saw, he urged a striking, though wholly impossible, plan which if adopted would have largely changed the development of one of our present chief items of Federal expenditure. In 1852 he suggested that three sections be added to the River and Harbor

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 355.

Bill, whereby the consent of Congress would be granted to the several states, and might by the latter be granted to their various municipalities, to levy a tonnage tax of not over ten cents per ton upon vessels entering the local harbors, such tonnage tax to be used in improving the harbors and the rivers and channels connected therewith. This scheme was an evident recognition of the inconsistency of the then extending river and harbor policy with the general policy of states' rights and was advocated distinctly on that ground. So earnestly did Douglas believe in the practicability of the plan that he spoke on the floor of Congress in its favor, discussing the constitutional phases of the issue, while later he sent to the governor of Illinois under date of January 2, 1854,[1] a letter in which he sought to vindicate his attitude. In this letter he took the view that by adopting his plan, commercial competition would automatically develop those harbors and channels which were of service to commerce in a way that was not possible under the system of artificial Federal aid. The notion was unmistakably a product of restlessness and discontent with the idea of Federal assistance, but can hardly be looked upon very seriously, since it was never proposed as a substitute for the river and harbor appropriations,—merely as an addition thereto.

The record of Douglas regarding Federal aid to internal improvements must thus in all its aspects

[1] Text given by Sheahan, *Life*, p. 358 ff.

be considered strikingly inharmonious with his general philosophy.

It is significant of his point of view that, notwithstanding the prominence he speedily attained in the Senate, Douglas took little or no part in the discussion of the more important economic questions then pressing upon the attention of Congress. The tariff issue, which had been a fundamental problem with the Democrats for many years, did not appeal to him, though he favored reciprocity with Canada in 1850–1851.[1] True, when the question came up in 1857, he undertook to express some views on the subject, but only with an unaccustomed reservation to the effect that he knew little or nothing about the issue.[2] That this modest statement was correct, was speedily demonstrated in his analysis of the question, as it then presented itself. He took the point of view that the question was essentially a matter of expediency, and that the framing of a tariff bill was therefore simply a problem of adjustments, so as to bring about an equality of burden upon different "classes" in the community. Some ideas of an unusually liberal character, however, were expressed by Douglas in connection with the tariff issue. He in 1857 secured the adoption of an amendment to the tariff act[3] of that year, making wool worth less than twenty cents free; advocated the free admission of works of art, and in certain

[1] Cutts, *Constitutional and Party Questions*, pp. 205–206.
[2] *Congressional Globe*, 34th Cong., 3d Sess., p. 353.
[3] Stanwood, *American Tariff Controversies*, Vol. II, p. 108.

other respects appeared to be decidedly in advance of the narrow, materialistic views on the question of customs which then controlled men of far broader opportunities for early education.

CHAPTER VII

ON THE SENATE THRESHOLD

THE chief work of Douglas's life was now to be begun. Up to the time of his entry into the Senate, his activities in national affairs had been of comparatively slender importance when viewed from the historical standpoint. Although a useful party man, already recognized as exceptionally effective in debate, not overscrupulous, and placing the progress of his party as well as the development of his own personal fortunes decidedly ahead of considerations of abstract ethics, there are probably few, if any, who would consider Douglas more than an interesting figure in the early history of Illinois, had his life been cut short at the time of his election to the Senate, or even within the first two years of his membership in that body.

This, however, was not to be. The ten years following his entry into the upper house of Congress were to form perhaps the most critical decade in the history of the United States under the Constitution, and in this critical period Douglas was to play one of the leading rôles.[1]

[1] For Douglas's personal appearance and for the impressions of contemporaries regarding the man at the time of his most

The body of which Douglas was now a member was the greatest forum which the country presented. At that time, the Senate had not become hopelessly crippled by purely machine control, nor had it fallen a prey to the influence of special business interests. It was a wide field of open debate in which large personalities moved across the stage with decided freedom. Great forces were at work there and the traditions of the body were, on the whole, high. Whatever may be thought of the dominating influences operative among the different groups in the Senate, it is a fact that they were, at all events, political and not commercial groups. Douglas's entry upon this first-class field for the display of his capacity was particularly auspicious. Webster, Clay and Calhoun were shortly to pass out. Seward, Chase and Sumner had not yet attained their full promise and were busy during the early fifties in organizing their great party. Morse says that the period from 1852 to 1860 "belonged to

conspicuous service in national political life, several sources of considerable value may be mentioned. The Washington correspondence of the New York *Tribune* gives in the main a substantially correct picture of Douglas's appearance on the floor from day to day under varying conditions. Clark E. Carr, in his *Stephen A. Douglas*, embodies in his sketch of Douglas's life a considerable number of impressions as received by contemporaries, including his own views. Mrs. Stowe, in a letter published in the New York *Independent*, has given a graphic picture of the man, and for the later period of his career Schurz and Villard (Schurz's *Reminiscences*, and Villard's *Memoirs*) are among the most recent and probably the most trustworthy sources of information. Rhodes (*History of the United States*), drawing heavily upon contemporary periodical material, adds valuable touches here and there.

Douglas more than to any other man." [1] And the judgment thus expressed is obviously true. Upon his coming into the Senate he was not so much overslaughed, as to make necessary a long period of apprenticeship ere he could gain the permission of some masterful leader to appear in debate, nor was the Senate so lacking in organization as to prevent the recognition of ability when it was exhibited. Fortunate thus in the personnel of his colleagues, he was doubly fortunate in the character of the themes by which he was confronted. There have been times in the history of the United States Senate when the character of the topics demanding attention has been such as to stifle ambition, but during the decade after Douglas's entry, hardly a subject that was dealt with failed to touch the nation's life in its innermost cells. There was not an action, not a sentence spoken by a member on the floor, not a committee appointment that might not have unlooked-for and far-reaching influence. It is not too much to say that Douglas seemed to have but a limited conception of the tremendous tasks to which he was now to set his hand.

[1] Morse, *Abraham Lincoln*, American Statesmen Series, 1899, Vol. I, p. 106. "From 1852 to 1860 Douglas was the most noteworthy man in public life in the country. Webster, Clay and Calhoun had passed away. Seward, Chase, and Sumner, still in the earlier stages of their brilliant careers, were organizing the great party of the future. This interval of eight years belonged to Douglas more than to any other man. He had been a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the presidency in 1852 and again in 1856; and had failed to secure it in part by reason of that unwritten rule whereby the leading statesmen are so often passed over. . ."

Calm, self-assured, arrogant in the political success which had hitherto attended his every movement, he regarded the future with no kind of apprehension.[1]

The portrait of Douglas during his earlier years in the United States Senate has been drawn by many hands and with substantial similarity of lines. It grew more and more distinct as time went on, until at the outbreak of the Civil War there was no man, not even excepting Lincoln, whose traits of character were more deeply graven upon the popular imagination. "He had high spirit, was ambitious, masterful, and self-confident," says Mr. Morse; "he was also an aggressive, brilliant, and tireless fighter in a political campaign, an orator combining something of the impressiveness of Webster with the readiness and roughness of the stump speaker. He had a thorough familiarity with all the politics, both the greater and the smaller, of the times; he was shrewd and adroit as a politician, and he had as good a right as any man then prominent in public life to the more dignified title of statesman. He had the art of popularity and upon

[1] "Precocious in youth, marvelously active in manhood, he had learned without study, resolved without meditation, accomplished without toil," says William Garrott Brown. "Whatever obstacles he had found in his path, he had either adroitly avoided them or boldly overleaped them, but never laboriously uprooted them. Whatever subject he had taken in hand, he had swiftly compassed it, but rarely probed to the heart of it. . . . His habits were convivial, and the vicious indulgences of his strong and masculine appetites had caused him frequent illnesses."

sufficient occasion could be supple and accommodating even in the gravest matters of principle."[1]

Douglas was now at an age when his faculties were in full vigor and when his physical appearance had taken on the aspect of maturity. He had been born in 1813 and upon his entry into the Senate in 1847 he was therefore barely thirty-five years old. The epithet of "Little Giant," which had been bestowed upon him by his affectionate followers, had been retained and with the lapse of years had become a more and more suitable description of the young politician.[2] In form he was now an exceedingly short, thick set man, full of vitality and with remarkable energy. Mrs. Stowe in 1856 saw him probably at his best and vividly described his good points as well as those in which he was less favored. "This Douglas," she wrote, unable altogether to suppress her antagonism, "is the very ideal of vitality. Short, broad and thick-set, every inch of him has its own alertness and motion. He

[1] Morse, *ante cit.*

[2] Forney, *Anecdotes of Public Men*, p. 146, describes him as follows: "No character, certainly no candidate for our highest office, was a completer master of the gift of securing tenacious friends than Stephen A. Douglas. He had scarcely touched the floor of Congress before he became an object of interest. His extreme youth, his boyish appearance, his ready wit, his fine memory, his native rhetoric, above all, his suavity and heartiness, made him a favorite long before he was named for President. He delighted in pleasant company. Unused to what is called 'etiquette,' he soon adapted himself to its rules, and took rank in the dazzling society of the capital. Many a time have I watched him leading in the keen encounters of the bright intellects around the festive board. To see him threading the glittering crowd with a pleasant smile or a kind word

has a good head and face, thick black hair, heavy black brows and a keen eye. His figure would be an unfortunate one were it not for the animation which constantly pervades it; as it is, it rather gives poignancy to his peculiar appearance; he has a small, handsome hand, moreover, and a graceful as well as forcible mode of using it. . . ."[1] Despite his "unfortunate" figure and his lowness of stature, there is every evidence that Douglas's personality made a strong, vivid impression upon all of those with whom he came into contact. He was not one of the vague, shadowy personalities so hard to bring out in clear traits even when the mind that has been at work has left its mark upon history. Indeed, from the beginning of his mature manhood, the physical force, energy and effectiveness of Douglas were superior in their effect upon contemporaries to the mere weight of his argument or the skill of its presentation.

Douglas, however, had never made up for the

for everybody, one would have taken him for a trained courtier. But he was more at home in the close and exciting thicket of men. That was his element. To call each one by name, sometimes by his Christian name; to stand in the centre of a listening throng, while he told some Western story or defended some public measure; to exchange jokes with a political adversary; or, ascending the rostrum, to hold thousands spellbound for hours, as he poured forth torrents of characteristic eloquence—these were traits that raised up for him hosts who were ready to fight for him. Eminent men did not hesitate to take their stand under the Douglas flag. Riper scholars than himself, older if not better statesmen, frankly acknowledged his leadership and faithfully followed his fortunes."

[1] Quoted in Rhodes, Vol. II, p. 128, from New York *Independent*, May 1, 1856.

lack of a cultivated and gentle early environment. Some of the formative years of his life had been spent on the frontier in the small country town where his chief forum of expression was the corner grocery, the saloon, or at best the dirty court room. The necessity of the most grinding economy during his earlier years had left its mark upon him, even though this had been partially erased by his subsequent prosperity. As he had increased in wealth, he had hardly increased correspondingly in its judicious use. He spent much money upon rather dapper clothing and was inclined to be lavish in social entertainment. On dissipation of various kinds he perhaps spent most freely of all. But the greatest lack in Douglas's personal equipment was the absence of dignity. Carl Schurz, no friend to Douglas or what he represented, recognized the essential parliamentary ability of the man but could not condone the personal characteristics in which it was enveloped. "There was something in his manner," wrote Schurz, "which strongly smacked of the bar-room. He was the idol of the rough element of his party, and his convivial association with that element left its unmistakable imprint upon his habits and his deportment. He would sometimes offend the dignity of the Senate by astonishing conduct. Once at a night session of the Senate I saw him, after a boisterous speech, throw himself upon the lap of a brother senator and loll there, talking and laughing, for ten or fifteen minutes, with his arm around the neck of his friend, who seemed to

be painfully embarrassed but could or would not shake him off." [1]

The same view which had impressed itself upon the mind of Schurz had also presented itself from a somewhat different angle of vision to another more critical, though possibly less sincere and single-minded observer. Edwin L. Godkin, keen critic as he was of men and events, spoke cuttingly in 1858 of some of the same things which had offended Schurz, in a letter from Washington, written while Douglas was at the height of his prestige. "He is a model demagogue," said Mr. Godkin. "He is vulgar in his habits and vulgar in his appearance, 'takes his drink,' chews his quid, and discharges his saliva with as much constancy and energy as the least pretentious of his constituents, but enters into the popular feelings with a tact and zest rarely equaled, and assails the heads and hearts of the multitude in a style of manly and vigorous eloquence such as few men can command. There lies in his bullet head and thick neck enough combativeness, courage, and ability for three men of his dimensions. The slightest touch of what genteel people would call improvement would spoil him. If he were one degree more refined he would be many degrees less popular. When he mounts the stump he holds the crowd in front of him in the hollow of his hand." [2]

[1] *Reminiscences*, Vol. II, p. 31.

[2] *Life and Letters of E. L. Godkin*, edited by Rollo Ogden, Vol. I, p. 175.

Other observers of foreign birth were more appreciative. W. H. Russell, who came to the United States as a war correspondent, was deeply impressed by him. "Few men speak better than Senator Douglas," he wrote; "his words are well chosen, the flow of his ideas even and constant, his intellect vigorous, and thoughts well cut, precise, and vigorous—he seems a man of great ambition, and he told me he is engaged in preparing a sort of Zollverein scheme for the North American continent, including Canada, which will fix public attention everywhere, and may lead to a settlement of the Northern and Southern controversies. For his mind, as for that of many Americans, the aristocratic idea embodied in Russia is very seductive; and he dwelt with pleasure on the courtesies he had received at the court of the Czar, implying that he had been treated differently in England, and perhaps France. And yet, had Mr. Douglas become President of the United States, his good-will toward Great Britain might have been invaluable, and surely it had been cheaply purchased by a little civility and attention to a distinguished citizen and statesman of the republic."[1]

Douglas's first marriage in 1847 was nearly synchronous with his entry in the Senate. It had lasted only a brief period, which however sufficed to give him an experience of happy family life and to exert, according to close acquaintances, a refining and restraining influence. His wife had died

[1] *My Diary North and South*, p. 37.

in 1853, leaving him with two children. The portrait of Mrs. Douglas is not very distinct, although Sheahan describes her in the usual eulogistic terms as a woman of "gentleness . . . and strong native good judgment," who "made home an abiding-place of peace and tranquillity, where all the associations were of a refined and Christian character." In entertaining, she "was judicious and yet munificent," and "won the respect of all his friends and divided with him their unbounded admiration." Considerable sentiment has been expended upon Douglas's first marriage but apparently without an adequate body of data. The main significant feature of this union was seen in connection with the fact that his father-in-law, Colonel Robert Martin of North Carolina, was a slave-owner, and dying shortly after Douglas's marriage, bequeathed to Mrs. Douglas his plantation and the slaves thereon.[1]

Much more is known of Douglas's domestic relations during the period of his second marriage. Subsequent to the death of the first Mrs. Douglas, he appears to have drifted, during the succeeding four years, into the somewhat nomadic and irregular existence which is supposed to be characteristic of the unmarried man, deteriorating also in personal habits and in mental traits. Late in 1856 he married again, this time Miss Adele Cutts of Washington. The second Mrs. Douglas was in every way a powerful moulding influence upon

[1] This incident has been treated elsewhere, see p. 88.

the career of her husband, and it may not be too violent an inference to believe that she was partially responsible for the changes of front which occurred during his later years with reference to various political and party questions. He became, according to Schurz, "more tidy and trim in his appearance and more careful in his habits, although even then there were rumors of occasional excesses." Mrs. Douglas kept a close eye upon him and accompanied him on electioneering journeys. Here the new influence which had now entered his life was plainly observed by the impressionable Villard,[1] who recorded the favorable notion which he had gained in his first meeting with Mrs. Douglas at the time when, as a young newspaper correspondent, he was admitted to speech with the great man who was then engaging Lincoln in debate. This impression was practically that of all observers of Douglas's second union. It, in fact, tended much to promote his prestige in Washington society as well as his better self-control. The fact that Mrs. Douglas was a Roman Catholic while her husband was either an atheist or an extreme liberal in religion[2] was perhaps the only element of discord or of unsuitability in the match. Mrs. Douglas's entertainments during the trying later period of the Lecompton struggle did much to overcome the antagonism which her husband's course aroused, and to place him at the head of a social coterie

[1] *Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 92.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 97.

among the most brilliant, in the technical sense of the word, then existing in Washington.[1]

The refining influences thus thrown about Douglas during the most eventful decade of his life were not, however, sufficient to remove all of the traces which his earlier career had left. The haughty and, in their own judgment, aristocratic Southerners, accepted Douglas's aid in the Senate but they privately sneered at some of the crudities which he still from time to time betrayed. When the Kansas struggle took place these private strictures, previously suppressed, became public and the organs of Southern feeling referred to "the rugged vulgarities of his early education," which, it was asserted, had been "smoothed down" by "association with Southern gentlemen."[2] Probably not too much weight should be given to the statements of such self-styled aristocrats, but it was true that Douglas had not the traditions of ancestral wealth or the consciousness of family power by which the claims of the Southerners on the floor of the Senate were fortified. He was essentially a self-made man and showed the roughnesses of his making all too plainly. A gentler spirit would perhaps not have succeeded as well in the frontier state from which he came, and Douglas stands favorably even in the comparison with Lincoln up to the time that the latter had been put into the crucible of stern respon-

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, pp. 435 *et seq.*, also Johnson, *Life*, p. 316.

[2] Quoted by Johnson, *Life*, p. 341 from Richmond *South*, quoted in Chicago *Times*, December 18, 1857.

sibility. It would be too much to expect that Douglas, representative as he was of Illinois conditions, should rise much higher than his source or be more than a glorified and enlarged example of the average man upon whom his own political status directly depended.

Perhaps there is nothing more noteworthy about Douglas's whole career in the Senate than his development of a distinct type of oratory, effective and to the point. It was this which attracted the attention of Mrs. Stowe during the trying days of 1858. While commenting severely upon Douglas, with whose views she had no sympathy, Mrs. Stowe could not but admit that he had "two requisites of a debater—a melodious voice and a clear sharply-defined enunciation," while she unwillingly conceded to him "the very best of logic and language" in dealing with the points he chose to discuss. Mrs. Stowe, in common with many others, noted, however, that Douglas's "forte in debating is his power of mystifying the point," and others regarded him as the prince of special pleaders. Even his most devoted biographers have not been able to obscure the fact that in many of his greatest arguments he was purely technical, and that his skill was wholly employed in making the worse appear the better reason. Withal, Douglas had the unusual talent of being interesting. By some, this was attributed to his "piquant personalities"; by others to his wonderful ability to bring into an argument or consideration of a subject multitudes

of side issues which succeeded in holding the attention even of those who were not directly interested in the main theme; by others to his keen ability in judging men and in pitching his argument so as to harmonize it with the tone of their minds. By all, it is conceded that his speeches had a wonderful clarity and force of presentation. Mrs. Stowe thought he lacked in "wit" and though he had a fair sense of humor, it is certainly true that in parliamentary debate there is but little of the light allusion and gentle sarcasm which his critic perhaps had in mind. As a debater, his chief weakness was lack of self-control; he was too easily led into the use of coarse and abusive epithets and personal references which did not suit the occasion and merely tended to put discussion or colloquy upon a low and offensive plane. Of this the most unfortunate example while he was in the Senate was perhaps his altercation with Sumner—when, however, there was but little to choose between him and his antagonist. On this as on many other occasions, the license to which Douglas resorted was unworthy of the best traditions of the Senate.

Throughout his senatorial career, Douglas's relations with his colleagues were in the main appropriate. His chief defect was in personal familiarities.[1] He could not be expected to mingle famil-

[1] "In all our accounts of him," writes William G. Brown, "he is represented as surrounded with intimates. Not without the power of impressing men with his dignity and seriousness of purpose, we nevertheless hear of him sitting on the knee of an eminent judge during a recess of the court, dancing from

iarly and closely with the leaders of the anti-slavery party, for whom he professed a loathing and contempt which was evidently more than the mere expression of noisy parliamentary hatred, and which was returned with interest by the New England men. Yet in times as trying as those from 1850 to 1860 it is worthy of comment that, on the whole, he maintained as equable a poise as he did. The most regrettable personal incident of the decade —the assault perpetrated by Brooks upon Sumner —was undoubtedly looked upon by Douglas with as much reprobation as by any other man. This incident, which occurred shortly after Douglas's speech, the culmination of the celebrated controversy with Sumner during the struggle over Kansas in 1858, was the result of the burning hatred of the extreme pro-slavery men for the bitter and austere statesman from Massachusetts. Sumner had been attacked by Brooks while on the floor of the Senate, and was inclined to think that just after the assault he saw Toombs, Douglas and Brooks standing by him. But for this there is no support, and Storey, the secretary and biographer of Sumner, evidently thinks the charge unjustified, for he says that Brooks "had made his purpose known to Edmund-

end to end of a dinner-table with the volatile Shields—the same who won laurels in the Mexican War, a seat in the United States Senate, and the closest approach anybody ever won to victory in battle over Stonewall Jackson; and engaging, despite his height of five feet and his weight of a hundred pounds, in personal encounters with Stuart, Lincoln's athletic law partner, and a corpulent attorney named Francis."

son, a representative from Virginia, and to Keitt, one of his colleagues from South Carolina and both were present in the Senate chamber at the time. Edmundson had advised with Brooks on Monday and Wednesday and was present at his request. Keitt, when the assault began, hurried up, flourishing a cane as if to prevent any interference with Brooks until his purpose was accomplished." Storey adds, "Senators Slidell and Douglas were in the anteroom when some one rushed in and cried out that a man was beating Sumner."[1] It was a substantial tribute to Douglas's known honesty of purpose that when he made his explanation on the floor to the effect that he was in the anteroom when the assault occurred and refrained from going in merely because he thought his motives might be misconstrued, the explanation was accepted without any question. No one familiar with the facts supposed that he had known of the plot against Sumner in any form or at any time. The intimate relationship which Douglas had with many of his colleagues in a body wherein mutual suspicion is often the prevailing tone, was aided by his great memory for incidents, names and personalities, and by the ability he had of making every one feel that he entertained a direct personal interest in their

[1] Storey, *Sumner*, American Statesmen Series, pp. 146–147. Douglas said: "My first impression was to come into the Senate chamber and help put an end to the affray if I could; but it occurred to my mind in an instant that my relations to Mr. Sumner were such that, if I came into the hall, my motives would be misconstrued perhaps, and I sat down again."

welfare and in their doings. Despite the numerous encounters on the floor which he could not have avoided if he would, and probably would not have avoided if he could, he regarded them as part of the day's work and as such not to be too closely borne in mind later on. He had no objection to meeting Greeley, in spite of the New York *Tribune's* assaults upon himself,[1] nor did he hesitate in spite of the bitter words which from time to time passed between him and Lincoln, to lay aside any personal animosity that might have been inspired during their passages at arms. In all this he showed himself unmistakably a great politician, and a politician at a time when political ability received the utmost measure of recognition and remuneration in popular prestige and personal advancement, and when it had never had in American history, probably, a more direct and significant influence in national affairs.

Douglas had not lacked for personal prosperity since his entry into Congress. Though his early years had been marred by the necessity for the closest economy, and though his early political endeavors had been more or less expensive, from the time he entered Congress he was able to provide adequately for himself and to lead a dignified and comfortable existence. His first marriage, as we have seen, had been fortunate from a pecuniary standpoint, while to this he had added the results of successful land speculation in Chicago—specula-

[1] Johnson, *Life*, p. 320.

tion whose success had been materially aided by the happy termination of the Illinois Central project. After making a substantial gift to Chicago University[1] he was able to realize about $90,000 in 1856 by the sale of his lands. His congressional salary was tolerably adequate and in his second marriage he lost no ground financially. Though a shrewd investor and speculator, Douglas was, however, far too keenly interested in politics for the sake of the game itself to spend a great amount of time in the pursuit of wealth. The problems before the Senate during his period of greatest activity were not those in which questions of property or investment figured very largely, and the temptation which has beset some later statesmen to shape his course in such a way as to advance his personal interests or to take advantage of official knowledge for the purpose of speculation, was not very strong. The Illinois Central "deal" was the most questionable act, perhaps, in which he was concerned, and even this was of a kind that by many would not be considered at the present day particularly offensive. He had refused the cruder solicitations to speculate in Western lands from which he might have drawn great gain as chairman of the Territories Committee, and in the main continued throughout his public life substantially clean-handed.

Although shrewd and far-seeing in such business transactions as he undertook, Douglas lacked the New England instinct of frugality. He was fre-

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 442.

quently but too careless in business relations.[1] He poured his money freely into his campaigns and lived at times in a rather prodigal manner. As his leadership in the Senate became better and better established, the social demands of his Washington life became more and more positive, and Douglas found himself compelled to meet these demands by concessions both of time and money which he probably would not personally have sanctioned from the mere standpoint of social prestige or individual pleasure. The break with the party, which followed

[1] W. E. Curtis (who, however, is a far from trustworthy writer) tells the following anecdote (*True Abraham Lincoln*, p. 74): "A singular story is told of a case in which a good many prominent men were involved besides Lincoln. Abraham Brokaw, of Bloomington, loaned five hundred dollars to one of his neighbors and took a note, which remained unpaid. Action was brought, the sheriff levied on the property of the debtor and collected the entire amount, but neglected to turn the proceeds over. Brokaw employed Stephen A. Douglas, who collected the amount from the bondsman of the sheriff, but returned to his seat in the Senate at Washington without making settlement. Like some other great men, Douglas was very careless about money matters, and, after appealing to him again and again, Brokaw employed David Davis to bring suit against the senator. Being an intimate friend and fellow Democrat, Davis disliked to appear in the case, and by his advice Brokaw engaged the services of Lincoln. The latter wrote to Douglas at Washington that he had a claim against him for collection and must insist upon prompt payment. Douglas became very indignant and reproached Brokaw for placing such a political weapon in the hands of an Abolitionist. Brokaw sent Douglas's letter to Lincoln, and the latter employed 'Long John' Wentworth, then a Democratic member of Congress from Chicago, as an associate in the case. Wentworth saw Douglas, persuaded him to pay the money, and forwarded five hundred dollars to Lincoln, who, in turn, paid it to Brokaw and sent him a bill of three dollars and fifty cents for professional services."

his attack upon Buchanan's endorsement of the Lecompton constitution in Kansas, did not diminish the social pressure upon Douglas. He was more sought after by curious callers and visitors to Washington than ever, and it became more necessary than ever that he should show a bold and prosperous front. It was largely to these social conditions, and to the heavy expenses to which during his struggle for advancement he was compelled to submit in his later years that his subsequent financial embarrassment was due, yet the situation in all probability could not have been avoided if he were to play the rôle and live the life that had partly been achieved by, and partly thrust upon, him.

It cannot be other than an interesting subject of speculation what would have been Douglas's course of personal development had he not been cut off in the flower of his maturity. His years in the Senate had already shown the power of growth, and of at least some change in point of view and in those intimate characteristics which make up the fulness of a man. Lincoln at the outbreak of the Civil War had but just started upon his great career of four years' duration. Douglas might have had a like experience. His personality, vivid and distinct as it was, had not, at the time of his death, been given an opportunity for complete expression; but, as will now be seen, he had been whirled onward by ambition and the dictates of expediency which had prevented its real development.

CHAPTER VIII

NORTH AND SOUTH

A CRITICAL period in the history of the United States was now at hand. Events whose ultimate causes had long before begun to have an obscure effect succeeded one another with a rapidity which called for all the statesmanship of the ablest public men, but which even the wisest had not been able fully to forecast, and against which they could not provide. The chief factors in the complex problem, which was to occupy the attention of Congress for ten years to come, and to culminate then in a disastrous civil war, were the new territories now on the eve of organization and the relation which they should bear to the United States, and the general issue of slavery, partly with reference to the existing states but more especially with regard to these newly organized territories. These difficulties had been brought to a pressing stage during the years 1848–1850 by the development of conditions in California which called for some decisive action on the part of Congress. Such action had not been taken at the session of 1848–1849; various efforts to secure it had been put forth in vain. The territory which had been acquired from Mexico under the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, including what afterward became California, Utah, New Mexico, etc., had been

left without any definite form of government, while the rush of gold-seekers to the southern Pacific coast had brought into existence a lawless community in which the better elements earnestly desired the establishment of a settled system of social and political life. Such, then, was the immediate situation when Congress was on the eve of assembling for the long session of 1849–1850.

It was a remarkable Senate before which this issue of the new territories and their government, with all that it involved, was to appear. The body was essentially in a transitional stage. Webster, Clay and Calhoun were about to serve for the last time together. Around them a group of younger and less known men, representing a new generation of statesmen, had now sprung up. Under the care of the older statesmen, and as a result of the unusual capacity and ability of the generation before 1850, the Senate had been gradually assuming a place of first importance in the national government. It was then that the foundations were laid for that supremacy over the House of Representatives which has continued to this day, subject to mutations and reverses. It was then that the Senate had indicated for the first time, with decided and definite tendency, its liability to become receptive ground for the peculiar type of interests which a later generation has denominated "special," as opposed to those presumably representing the broader popular well-being, although it had not yet committed itself to them. Douglas had already shown his general dis-

position in the questions that were to be dealt with, but there remained the crucial test which would definitely place him on one side or the other in the contest.

In a general way, events had now so shaped themselves as to develop with substantial distinctness a sectional or geographical party line between the North and the South. Slavery had of course long been a burning issue, but patriotic men had hoped that it would not necessarily be the cause of division too deep for reconciliation. In substance the issues now at stake were as follows :

The North demanded :

I. The establishment of governments for all the territories of the United States, with a prohibition of slavery.

II. The admission of California.

III. The abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia.

IV. The abolition of slaveholding in the District of Columbia.

The South demanded :

I. An efficient fugitive slave act.

II. The establishment of territorial governments for all the territories, including California, but without a prohibition of slavery.[1]

It was on this ground that the contest was to take place. Congress presented a rather varied political complexion. In the House there were 112 Demo-

[1] This classification follows that given in Sheahan's *Douglas*, p. 126.

crats, 105 Whigs, and thirteen Free Soilers,[1] while the division of opinion in the Senate, although less distinct, represented substantially the same lines of demarcation. In the President's message for December, 1849,[2] the territorial question was called to the attention of Congress. He urged that action which had been taken by the inhabitants of California, with a view to organizing a territorial government, should be considered. He thought that it was not wise to act on the position of New Mexico because its people would probably soon seek admission just as had the people of California. The sentiment in Congress was now confused and deeply antagonistic. The Northern states desired that California and New Mexico should be added to the free territory of the Union. Southerners desired that there should be no interference with what they considered their right to take slaves into the new territory. California had held a convention on May 6, 1849, with the object of forming a state, and at a later deferred meeting on September 3d had adopted a constitution, similar to the constitutions of New York and Iowa, containing a bill of rights in which was a clause forever prohibiting slavery in the new state. The convention had finished its work on the 13th of October. The President's message, therefore, amounted to an endorsement of the action of the convention in California, while he

[1] Rhodes, *History of the United States*, Vol. I, p. 117.

[2] *Messages and Papers*, Vol. V, pp. 18–19; see also Vol. IV, p. 629, *et seq.*

COLLEGE OF THE SEQUOIAS
LIBRARY

reserved the New Mexican matter for the future. Immediately a storm broke in Congress. Resolutions calling for information were adopted in both houses, and early in January several important proposals were put into the form of bills and introduced. Simultaneously memorials were received from various states protesting against any action on the part of Congress which would extend the system of slavery. Among the proposals which thus jostled one another on the floor of Congress, were schemes for the reorganization of the state of Texas upon a smaller geographical basis, and a plan creating governments for California, Deseret, New Mexico and San Jacinto. New fugitive slave provisions were offered, and for a time it seemed as if Congress were about to plunge into an indefinitely protracted controversy.

Events in the House had been such as to stimulate this belief. The mixed composition of the body had necessitated a series of struggles lasting three weeks before a speaker could be chosen, and in the course of that time the issues pending between North and South had been thoroughly discussed. The contest had culminated in the election of Howell Cobb of Georgia over Robert C. Winthrop, the New England candidate. Cobb was a strong pro-slavery man and his choice alarmed the Northern element. Clay and his associates were determined, if possible, to settle this threatening controversy without unnecessarily widening the breach between the two sections. On the 29th of

January Clay offered a series of compromise resolutions, whose adoption he earnestly advocated. These resolutions provided for the admission of California with the prohibition of slavery contained in her constitution. They also included a proposal for the establishment of territorial governments in the area acquired from Mexico without any restriction as to slavery. The subject of prohibiting the slave trade in the District of Columbia was not neglected, but it was declared that the abolition of slavery without the consent of Maryland and without compensating the owners would be unwise. It was further affirmed that Congress had no power to interfere with the slave trade between the states. Adequate legal means for the recovery of fugitive slaves were demanded. As to the questions affecting Texas and New Mexico, provision was made for determining the boundary line, paying the public debt of Texas, and ending the latter's claim to any portion of New Mexico.[1]

Clay's speech in behalf of his resolutions was powerful and convincing, despite some blemishes, but the time was not one when oratory could immediately gain the end in view. Douglas, as has been noted,[2] had become the chairman of the Committee on Territories, and he now moved that the constitution of the state of California be referred to his own committee. An effort was made to send it

[1] These resolutions are fully analyzed in Rhodes, Vol. I, p. 122—an analysis which has been followed here.

[2] See *ante*, pp. 145, etc.

to a select committee of fifteen, which should also be charged with the duty of considering the general question of slavery in the territories. Douglas won his point and, as he had already secured the reference to his committee of bills establishing a state or territorial government in Deseret, as well as other measures similar in character, he now had jurisdiction over the whole problem. He was thus the engineer in charge of the machinery by which the actual work of the Senate was to be done, although Clay and his compeers of the older generation were still the spectacular figures on the floor.

Clay's speech in defense of his compromise proposals was answered by Calhoun on the 4th of March;[1] Webster followed on the 7th of the same month. Calhoun's reply was in fact his last public utterance, for before the end of the month he had been placed in his grave. His argument was cogent, calling attention to the necessity for union but outlining the causes of the dissatisfaction of the South, and suggesting the danger which confronted the nation in the future. He thought that Clay's compromise plan would not be effective. It was necessary that the Northern states, now rapidly growing in power and numbers and tending to surpass the South in political strength, should pause to consider whether they were willing to drive the opposite section to a point when it could be longer held in the Union only by force. Might it not be better to offer the South reasonable terms? Such terms

[1] *Congressional Globe*, 1st Sess., 31st Cong., p. 451, *et seq.*

would be found in a constitutional amendment which would give equal power to the Southern as against the Northern states, enabling them to protect themselves from possible aggression. Equal rights must be given to the South in the new territory, runaway slaves must be returned, and the agitation of the subject must be ended. Calhoun believed that these issues could now properly be discussed because the California question was a test issue; should that state be accepted with its free constitution, similar action in the case of other territories might be expected. This would progressively result in a relative narrowing of the borders of the slave states, and in limiting their powers in the Senate so that ultimately they would sink into a position of insignificance which could not be endured.

Calhoun's prophecies of disaster were, by some, considered ridiculous, while even Benton thought the forebodings of the South Carolinian somewhat absurd. Others agreed with his opinions. Webster, on March 7th, while not depreciating the significance of Calhoun's views, urged with irresistible force the desirability of getting away from all contemplation of the prospect of secession. He would have the Senate adopt a positive and definite policy based upon the immediate necessities of the case. He reviewed the slavery situation and asserted that the South had been fairly dealt with by the establishment of the existing boundary line for slavery—the line of 36° 30′ which took in practically the

whole of Texas and would ultimately create a slave area of substantial size. To the idea that slavery might exist in this area he said the government was solemnly pledged. As to California and New Mexico, the character of their industry and general climatic conditions showed that they offered no field for slavery. Both were free states by nature and as such both must be admitted to the Union. The South had a grievance, said Webster, in connection with the fugitive slave question, and this must be allayed. The speaker gave wholesome advice to the Southern states. He suggested that they should not heed the partisan and bitter attacks of Abolitionists upon them and their slavery, and intimated that some of the writing and speech currently tolerated in the South was equal in virulence to that of which Southerners complained as practiced at the North.

Webster's address had a decidedly wholesome effect, entirely apart from its remarkable oratorical success and its bearing upon the future status of the speaker himself. Northern men attacked him bitterly because of his endorsement of the idea that they had been unfair in the fugitive slave question, while Webster's acceptance of a drastic bill presented by Mason and containing provisions intended to control this whole matter, goaded them to irrepressible irritation. But the savage denunciations of its author offered by the extreme Abolitionist element did not materially affect the permanent and far-reaching influence of the 7th of March address.

Douglas had wisely waited for the indications of feeling in the Senate and elsewhere to become marked, and now finding them in conformity with his own ideas, he moved forward with a program which he had planned to develop in his committee. He spoke strongly on the 13th and 14th of March, but confined himself largely to the California question and presented cogently the same arguments which had been urged by the great figures on the floor in support of the admission of that state. He attacked Webster bitterly for his statement of the reasons why California and New Mexico should be admitted as free states, but he also rebutted with vigor the argument of Calhoun, in particular that portion of it which had been based upon the idea of sectional equality among the states of the Union. The amendment to the Constitution urged by Calhoun he stigmatized as ridiculous. The fears of the North about the admission of New Mexico and California as slave states he waved aside with a sneer, referring to his own former position when he had predicted that California would certainly establish a free constitution. He demanded for California that government which had been selected by the people, noting that the insertion in the constitution of the slavery or anti-slavery provision was merely an academic issue, since the nature of the soil and of the industries of the state would, under any circumstances, dictate a system of free labor and free enterprise. Douglas did not attempt to cover the general field which Clay had covered in his first

great speech ; nor did he definitely accept the compromise program, although he spoke in appreciative fashion of Clay's action.[1]

The effort, however, to advance the bills in the form in which Douglas had reported them on the 25th of March, *i. e.*, measures to admit California, and to establish territorial governments in Utah and New Mexico, was premature. Some members of the Senate desired to have the whole question of slavery in the territories, the California question, and the other territorial issues dealt with in one bill, because they believed that such a measure would stand a better chance of adoption than a series of measures embracing the more or less debatable propositions over which men's minds were now struggling. Benton, for his part, was particularly desirous that the California question should be dealt with separately. He saw no reason why it should be made a mere pawn in the slavery discussion, for in his view the Californians presented a simple and concrete issue. In this opinion Douglas substantially agreed, but the final settlement was not reached until April 18th, when, the subject having proven itself too troublesome to be adjusted in any other way, it was decided to establish a select committee of thirteen members to deal with the whole problem of slavery. This committee, as elected by ballot in the Senate, did not include Douglas, who had failed to align himself with Clay, Cass, Webster, and the

[1] The text of this speech is found in *Congressional Globe*, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., *Appendix*, p. 364, *et seq.*

other great leaders or to secure or accept a status as a distinct follower of any of the senatorial factions. In spite of the creation of the committee Douglas requested that his bill for the admission of California should be taken up, and when Clay said that he must in that case seek to amend it by the insertion of extraneous provisions, Benton threatened protracted resistance. It was evident that Douglas's urgency could not succeed against the carefully framed plans of Clay, who confessedly and frankly favored a general or "omnibus" measure.

Clay, as the chairman of the select committee, finally reported a so-called "omnibus bill" consisting of Douglas's two measures already reported from the Committee on Territories, the one providing for the admission of California and the other for the establishment of territorial governments in Utah and New Mexico. In the latter the select committee had inserted a provision, refusing to the territorial legislature any right to act upon questions involving slavery. Clay spoke in behalf of the measure on the 13th of May, and two days later Douglas, with characteristic pertinacity, insisted that a test vote be taken on the question of dealing with the bills separately or together. He was defeated by a small majority, and, Clay's program having been adopted, actual debate was opened. A bitter struggle over slavery was now precipitated. Jefferson Davis asked to have the bill amended so as to restrain the territorial legislature from interfering with rights

of property growing out of the institution of African slavery, but this proposal was defeated. Douglas sought to strike out the provision restraining the legislature from acting in any way on the slavery question, but he, too, failed. Many efforts were made to secure some amendment which would specifically authorize the people of the territories to offer constitutions with or without slavery, as they themselves might determine, whenever they came to present their territories for admission as states. Douglas definitely advocated the insertion of some such provision and explained why he had not placed it in the bill originally. He thought it was merely the assertion of an already existing, an unquestionable, an inextinguishable constitutional right. He had "always held that the people have a right to settle these questions as they choose not only when they come into the Union as a state but that they should be permitted to do so while a territory." Nevertheless, he saw no reason why, if it were desired, an expression of constitutional principle of this kind might not be incorporated in the bill. Finally the provision in the shape offered by Soulé on the 15th of June was adopted by a substantial majority.

In the subsequent debate, Douglas favored the seating of the California members in the House immediately upon the passage of the bill. He opposed the plans of Soulé and others who desired to make the state's admission conditional upon its relinquishment to the Federal government of the public do-

main within its area. Thus the controversy dragged on until the 9th of July when the death of President Taylor impended. Work was deferred until the 15th of the same month. Discussion was then resumed and continued throughout the remaining two weeks of the month. On the 31st of July, a long and heated day's work resulted in striking out of the bill everything that related to Texas and New Mexico, and then everything bearing upon California. The territory of Utah was all that now remained and from the provisions concerning it Douglas succeeded in eliminating, with the consent of the Senate, the amendment, inserted by the select committee, by which the legislature would be prohibited from passing any laws relating to African slavery. Upon a motion of Jefferson Davis, concurred in by Douglas, the Southern boundary of Utah was to be fixed at 36° 30′, and thus Utah was to be definitely placed north of the much controverted line. Upon objection by Hale and some of the extreme anti-slavery men, however, the line was set at 37°, and the Utah bill was passed and sent to the House.

The Senate had exhausted itself with the constitutional controversies and other struggles which had attended the progress of this measure, but Douglas was still fresh and unwearied. Without hesitating, he immediately called up his original bill for the admission of California and secured its passage on the 13th of August. He then called for the New Mexico bill, framed upon the same terms as the

Utah bill, and pushed it through with comparatively little debate. The points in which he was now primarily interested had been disposed of, but he did not neglect the other features of the Compromise originally urged by Clay. Late in August the Fugitive Slave Law was passed. Three Northern Democrats voted against this measure while fifteen Northern senators did not vote at all.[1] The slave trade was abolished in the District of Columbia on September 15th, and the House promptly ratified the work of the Senate by moderate majorities, although there also a large number of Northern men refrained from voting.

To all practical purposes Clay had succeeded in securing the adoption of his compromise plan. In the attainment of this result he had been powerfully seconded by Douglas, who had worked, and voted for, every feature of the general scheme except the Fugitive Slave Law, and he had refrained from voting on this only because he was under the necessity of being out of Washington at the time. He warmly favored the bill.

Clay could not have developed the details of the great plan which his mind had originally conceived, nor could he probably have managed in the Senate the various bills in which the legislation was embodied. Douglas was familiar with the grouping of parties, and was an incomparable master of the peculiar art of congressional jugglery by which the adoption of ideas against which there is a substan-

[1] Rhodes, Vol. I, p. 182.

tial feeling of opposition can be secured. Although eclipsed by the commanding personality of Clay, he nevertheless reaped an ample measure of recognition from his fellow senators. Davis directly and pointedly complimented him, and other Southerners, now that the battle was over for the time, were inclined to feel that they had emerged from the struggle very satisfactorily, and to accord due honor to the manager whose efforts had so greatly contributed to what they chose to regard as a victory. Douglas was not slow to accept the credit for the work and on the 23d of December, 1851, plainly put himself on record as having "originated and proposed" the measures contained in the Omnibus Bill.[1] He was undoubtedly pleased with his own success as a manipulator, gratified at the apparently final disposition of a vexed question, and willing to stand before the country as a harmonizer of conflicting factions.

Like many legislators, Douglas had, however, acted in the hazy political atmosphere of Washington without a very clear perception of what his constituency would think of his course. He now found it necessary to meet the views of a body of voters which had its own ideas about the slavery question and the North's relations with the South, and which did not value so highly the arts of the floor manager as did the professional politicians at

[1] *Congressional Globe*, 1st Sess., 32d Cong., *Appendix*, p. 65. The speech is also quoted in Sheahan's *Douglas*, the words used above appearing on p. 166.

Washington. The fugitive slave act had been bitterly attacked throughout the North. This was in line with the denunciation which had been heaped upon Webster because of the latter's assertion that the Southerners had some grievances in connection with the recovery of their slaves. Anti-slavery feeling had been growing rapidly in Illinois, as elsewhere noted,[1] and Douglas found himself out of harmony with his constituency. He was in a position to suffer from the misrepresentations of political opponents who were glad to find an opportunity of successful attack. The City Council of Chicago, falling under the control of such influences, passed resolutions denouncing as traitors those who voted for the Fugitive Slave Law, as well as those who failed to vote against it. Going somewhat beyond its sphere, the Council also released the citizens, officers and police of the city from any obligation to assist in the execution of the law.[2] Douglas himself was present at the meeting at which this action was taken, but desiring a better audience and feeling that the atmosphere was unfavorable to a fair hearing, he announced that he would speak on the following evening, October 23d. As promised, he delivered at that time a general defense of what he had done in the Senate, with special reference to the Fugitive Slave Law. So successful was his argument on that occasion, so persuasive his review of the conditions which led to the action of Congress, that the speaker carried all before him. Rising to

[1] See p. 103.

[2] Sheahan, *Douglas*, p. 159.

the spirit of the occasion, as he more and more felt the drift of public sentiment toward him, he closed the speech by offering resolutions in favor of carrying into effect the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law and of performing every other duty and obligation under the Constitution of the United States. The resolutions were adopted without dissent and only a mild protest was heard against further resolutions repudiating the action of the City Council. It was a remarkable personal victory but little more ; for, as Douglas was presently to discover, the dissatisfaction in the West and North due to the conditions at which the Fugitive Slave Law was aimed was too deep seated to admit of easy extinguishment.

CHAPTER IX

"AMERICAN" FOREIGN POLICY

DOUGLAS'S prestige was now such that he was an obvious possibility for the presidency. Up to the close of the struggle on the compromise measures of 1850, this had been at least doubtful. He was still only thirty-seven years old, and thus far his youth had decidedly militated against his chances. Moreover, it had been questioned whether his abilities were those which would warrant his party in considering him a figure of national size. The discussions centring about the Compromise of 1850 had removed many of these doubts. They had shown him to be a man keen and acute in debate, skilled in congressional manipulation, and able to rally his own constituency to his position, instead of blindly listening with his ear to the ground for the rumblings of popular sentiment that he might shape his course as opportunity seemed to require. He had shown himself to be a man of vigor and of independence, by no means an idealist, but governed by the most practical of practical political considerations. Moreover, it was not the least significant occurrence of the session of 1849–1850 that there were now or soon after removed from the Senate some of the most important national figures. The overshadowing dominance of the elder states-

men had kept Douglas from exhibiting before the country as vigorous a growth as he would have liked, but he was at last in a position to move forward. It was evident that the Democratic party, if it wished control for the future, must have as its candidate a man who would to an extent harmonize the conflicting elements in the party. There was need of a leader who would in some measure assure a unity of spirit and purpose. The rapid growth of the West and Northwest had rendered those sections politically important, and past attachments yet sat so lightly upon the people that the vote of these states might be thrown one way or the other as circumstances seemed to require. They might thus become the deciding factor in any future national campaign.

Furthermore, the controlling question in national politics now concerned the new territories which were seeking admission to the Union, and the status of slavery therein. Douglas, by reason of his chairmanship of the Committee on Territories in the Senate, was a foremost student of these issues and must be reckoned with in any consideration of them. Finally, he came from a state which included a substantial number of slavery as well as of anti-slavery men, and might be expected to hold the balance much more nearly even than one who was distinctly predisposed by surroundings toward one side or the other. Since he had entered the Senate, Douglas had gained in poise, and improved somewhat in manner. Although he retained many

Western roughnesses, having never been able to overcome the effect of early circumstances and conditions, he was at least adaptable upon the surface. The discriminating Rhodes[1] remarks that he "took on quickly the character of his surroundings, and in Washington society, he soon learned the ease of a gentleman and acquired the bearing of a man of the world." Opinions to the contrary were of course not lacking,[2] but he had at least gained so far in polish as to be an available man even for the highest office. Although he was already "convivial," there was at this time "no authenticated instance of his having drunk to such excess" as to warrant a charge of addiction to liquor. Despite his small stature he had attained what was considered an impressive personality, although, as his friends admitted, he was "a little bit corpulent"—a defect for which he somewhat made up by affecting fashionable dress.

Moreover, Douglas had developed an almost perfect political machine. He controlled every Federal office in Illinois,[3] and through his friends he practically controlled almost every state and county office. In other states he had an active and influential personal organization and following. It was not strange, then, that as the great figures of his party fell away, he should regard himself as entitled to wear the mantle of leadership. Although he later declared that he was not so much of

[1] *History*, Vol. I. p. 245 [2] See pp. 139, *et seq.*
[3] Carr, *Stephen A. Douglas*, p. 61.

a "sucker" as to aspire to the presidency,[1] there is ample evidence that before 1850 he seriously entertained this ambition, and the idea was now beginning to find acceptance in other minds.

It was already time to prepare for the forthcoming campaign. Among those who might fairly be considered his rivals for the nomination of the party in 1852 were Cass, Buchanan and Marcy. To shape his course in such a way as to pass the older and better known figures in the race was now Douglas's desire. He had first to make up his mind as to the consequences of his action in connection with the Compromise of 1850, and the lines along which he would guide himself in the shifts, evasions, plots, and trickeries that must intervene between him and the nomination, if he were to get it. The year 1850 was closing; the campaign would be actively begun early in 1852. He had, therefore, about a year in which to make his preparations. First and foremost was the question of slavery and the ascertainment whether the country at large would accept the compromise measures of 1850 as, for some reasonable time at least, a settlement. Douglas looked anxiously about for information on this subject. In Illinois, which might be regarded as a typical Western state where opinion was still two-fold, conditions did not seem altogether promising. In New England they appeared still less so. Incidents reported from Massachusetts in connection with the application of the Fugitive

[1] Villard, *Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 96.

Slave Law showed a degree of excitement which augured ill for the future. Southerners were quick to charge that the North was acting in bad faith; that it would not enforce the legislation of Congress. As weeks went by, Douglas became convinced that his only safety lay in definitely upholding the Fugitive Slave Law, thereby gaining the support of the Southern wing of the party to which he felt himself more and more drawn, and in attacking with vigor the purely Abolition group which had already caused him trouble in Illinois, and was threatening to disturb the artificial harmony established at Washington. He was of the opinion that it was still not too late to make an end of the Abolition movement, and as soon as he reached Washington for the new session of Congress, he vigorously assailed those who had attempted to stir up general feeling against the legislation comprehended in the Compromise. In this attitude Douglas unexpectedly found himself supported by leaders in the opposition party, who, despite their very hostile tactics of the preceding session and their refusal to vote either way on the Fugitive Slave Law, were desirous of conciliating public opinion. Especially were they concerned in preventing Democrats from getting into a position where they could put forward the claim that they were the defenders of the Constitution. On both sides, then, the effort to sustain the Compromise was pushed forward. Extremists, like Sumner, who sought to reopen the fugitive slave question, were rebuked in open Con-

gress. There was thus no chance of an issue in connection with slavery, and, on the whole, Douglas's better judgment approved, for he felt that, by his action of the preceding year, he had already gained whatever political advantages were to be had.

The question still remained how he should conduct himself in reference to the presidential situation. How could he develop a personal policy which would seem to entitle him to the nomination? In looking for such a policy Douglas and his followers determined to put forward the idea of an American system under which the United States should develop a distinct position of its own with reference to foreign countries, giving up, in a measure, the attitude of aloofness which had hitherto characterized it. It would not to-day seem that any prospective candidate for the presidency could very confidently base his hopes for popular support upon his attitude with respect to foreign countries, or to the position of the United States in its relations with such countries. But conditions sixty years ago were different. The Mexican War had recently ended, the Cuban question was pressing for solution, relations with Canada and Great Britain were somewhat uncertain. Perhaps Douglas was right in thinking that the foreign policy of the country afforded the best field for his efforts. Immigration, already beginning to excite serious alarm in some minds, might necessitate important negotiations with other countries. To one who be-

lieved that the slavery question had been set at rest for some time, the problem of foreign relations was possibly the most immediate issue.

At any rate, Douglas and his friends went forward on this theory. The foreign policy upon which they now embarked was to be framed in accord with a so-called "American idea." Every question which brought the United States into relations with other countries was to be viewed and dealt with on an "American" plan. In order to throw discredit upon Webster and others who were following a conservative policy, designed to avoid the development of difficulty with foreign nations, they were to be charged with "old fogyism." As a target for practice, a minor issue, raised by the arrival of Kossuth in the United States and his desire that this country should intervene in the Hungarian situation, was set up. Douglas's view, as expressed on the floor of the Senate, was that the same principle of states' rights which he had sought to apply in the relations between the states of the Federal union might be equally applicable to relations between other countries or sections of other countries. Without very much acquaintance with foreign political conditions, he argued that wherever one nation sought to intervene concerning the affairs of another, destroying the liberties or privileges of that other, a third government might take a hand in the struggle in order to support the general idea of nationality and independence. As to the treatment to be accorded by the United States

to Kossuth as an individual, Douglas argued that we had a right to do as we pleased without regard to what foreign countries might think. The United States must stand as an independent nation, supporting the general abstract principles upon which it had itself been organized. It should minimize, so far as possible, the dictates of diplomatic usage and the customs of international relationship as controlled by the traditions of European practice. This idea was promptly and enthusiastically accepted by the Douglas party and utterances based upon it, sometimes couched in rather abusive language, were put into circulation. In these declarations an effort was made to discredit the element in national politics best represented by Webster.

Coupled with the general notion of pushing forward this "American idea" in foreign politics, was the concrete plan to favor the acquisition of Cuba, probably on a slavery basis, shrewdly designed to secure Southern sympathy and votes. Douglas, however, was now convinced that it would not be wise to bring up the question of slavery in too acute a form during his campaign for the presidency, but he did not conceal his desire for the annexation of Cuba—a policy which he continued to advocate in after years at a time when the idea of accepting the island was much more offensive to the North. Provided thus with a foreign policy which he intended to use for political purposes, especially in the South, and with the beginnings of an excellent organization throughout the country, Douglas now needed

only the kind of personal support which would come from those who believed that they could advance their own interests through a new man, rather than through an older one who had already pledged himself to the fortunes of a great number of dependents. In order to consolidate the support that he required in this particular respect, Douglas definitely committed himself to the notion that a general change of Federal officials would be desirable. He practically declared war on the men who were then holding the minor offices at Washington, particularly in cases where these men had not rendered recent and effective political service. It is necessary, however, to acquit Douglas of acting inconsistently in this respect. He had been a spoilsman from his youth up, invariably seeking to throw such places as he could control to those who had done the work of the party. True, his influence had never before reached the large importance it had recently assumed, yet there was no reason why he should have applied to national affairs a principle different from that in which he believed as a guide for state and local conduct. In seeking to draw to himself the unattached and newer elements of the party whose nomination, he believed, would put him into the presidency, he was not much worse than other politicians of his day. There is no evidence that in his pledges or in his public expressions of opinion he showed an undue brutality or went farther than his contemporaries would have gone under similar temptation.

The work of making Douglas his party's candidate was being vigorously pressed and at first his prospects seemed very favorable, for the only manifest error of his friends was in attempting to discredit other competing candidates and to outline too distinctly Douglas's attitude on the slavery question. Although he himself resorted to the common political device of repudiating much that was done in his behalf as matter about which he knew nothing and over which he certainly had no control, the conditions were such as to alarm his competitors for the nomination. Douglas's candidacy was a new and difficult element in the familiar problem of presidential politics, and it was only natural that all should unite for the moment in order to crush the candidate who was rising up to defeat the plans of the older groups. To do this, however, required time, and by the close of the year 1851, after a twelvemonth of contriving, scheming and organizing, Douglas believed himself well on the road to success. There is every evidence that in the early days of 1852 he felt that he had matters, potentially at least, very much in his own hands. In an unpublished letter to a friend,[1] dated February 25, 1852, he said: "Prospects look well and are improving every day. If two or three Western states will speak out in my favor, the battle is over. Can anything be done in Iowa and Missouri? That is very important. If some one could

[1] Manuscript letter quoted by Johnson, *Stephen A. Douglas*, p. 203.

go to Iowa, I think the convention in that state would instruct for me. In regard to our own state, I will say a word. Other states are appointing a large number of delegates to the convention, . . . ought not our state to do the same thing so as to ensure the attendance of most of our leading politicians at Baltimore? . . . This large number would exert a great moral influence on the other delegates."

These hopes soon faded. It became more and more evident that the elder statesmen had taken the alarm and that the existing organization of the party could not be controlled in the interest of Douglas. A few states in which he had succeeded in breaking ground with his own organization, and in which the errors made by overzealous followers had not aroused very strong prejudice, caused their delegations to be instructed for him. The convention was to be held on June 1st in Baltimore.[1] Fully a month before, however, it had become quite evident that Douglas's "boom," while lusty and vigorous, must be considered only preliminary to something that might develop in the future. On the first ballot, the convention gave Cass 116 votes, Buchanan ninety-three, Marcy twenty-seven, Douglas twenty, and other candidates twenty-five. The number necessary to a choice was 188. On later ballots Cass lost ground and Douglas grew stronger, his maximum being

[1] Stanwood, *History of the Presidency*, p. 248, and same authority for ballot figures.

reached on the twenty-ninth ballot when he received ninety-one votes. In that particular ballot, a "dark horse" was brought into the race. This was Franklin Pierce, who received fifteen votes from the Virginia delegation. Douglas had been pretty well aware of the scheme which was now to be developed, and there is no evidence that he was at all disappointed by the result. He knew that the regular leaders had brought forward the name of Pierce, a good many weeks before the convention met, partly with a view to crushing his own chances and partly because it was believed that a man of a less decided position on national issues than the old-line candidates would have a better opportunity to win. Douglas's support on the first ballot had come very largely from his own state. Even such states as had promised their aid had not rallied to him at the outset, either because he himself at the last moment had given orders to the contrary, as some have believed, or for other reasons. The "dark-horse" plan met all the expectations of its advocates. Mr. Pierce gradually gained in strength until on the forty-ninth ballot he got a practically unanimous vote of 282, only six votes being cast for all other candidates. For Vice-President, William R. King of Alabama was unanimously named on the second ballot, and it is an interesting fact that Douglas was not urged to accept the second place but reserved himself, wisely it then seemed, for the greater prize at some time in the future.

Having fully anticipated this defeat of his hopes, Douglas was able to make the customary display of cordiality which is demanded by American politics between two rival candidates for office, after one has succeeded and the other has been defeated. He telegraphed his congratulations to the convention in the usual terms, and immediately began to cast about for the future, believing that at the end of the next four years he would be able to make a better showing. An analysis of his maximum vote in the convention indicated that his organization was well developed and wide-spread. That it had a peculiar staying quality was illustrated by the fact that on the very last ballot he still had two votes. What alarmed the older politicians even more was that he had not exhibited his greatest power; but had evidently masked it to some extent as soon as he definitely understood that he could not muster the necessary number of votes. The point at which Douglas seemed to be lacking did not apparently lie where his friends had feared a year before, at the time when an effort was made to equip him with a national policy. They believed that he would prove to be weak as a figure in the country as a whole. Instead, singularly enough, he seemed to need strong sectional support. Although he had a good following in New England and the North, he could not of course rank as a candidate of that section. In the same way, although he was evidently well liked in the South, he was not yet definitely accepted as a Southern candidate. It was

strange, but manifest, that he lacked strength in the Middle West, exactly the region where he ought to have exhibited it. This was probably due to an overconfident belief that local pride without positive work would carry him forward in that section. But local pride was then somewhat scanty in the Middle West, and it would appear that the experience with the convention of 1852 had convinced Douglas that he must get the support of some one portion of the Union for his candidacy, while of course he continued to draw around himself the broadly distributed reinforcements which every presidential candidate must have in sections remote from his main seat of power. The more cordial and hearty support of the South was indicated as a remedy for the weakness in his organization which had manifested itself at the last moment before the critical struggle in 1852, and toward the application of this specific the ambitious aspirant must now bend his energies.

Meanwhile he had before him what was for the moment a more important contest—that of securing a reëlection to the Senate wherein his term was now shortly to expire. The retention of his seat would evidently be necessary to the furtherance of his presidential ambitions. This task, however, proved not to be difficult. He entered the campaign vigorously, associating the move for his reelection with the effort of his party to elect the new President. He emerged from the fall contest in 1852 with a new term of office for himself and

with additional personal prestige, due to strenuous and ardent speaking of the usual partisan type over a very wide territory. It is an interesting fact that the territory wherein he appeared seems to have been chosen with a view to giving him a chance to appeal to an electorate with which his weakness at the convention had been most obvious.

Douglas's utterances, from the time of his defeat in the national convention throughout the campaign and on into the next session of Congress, indicated no belief on his part that his position, while a candidate, had been erroneously taken. He favored Cuban annexation during the summer and fall of 1852 and also urged, as opportunity offered, his "American policy" in foreign affairs. This seemed to be a policy of defiance to European nations at every point where their wishes came into conflict with our own. The questions thus raised, however, were of no particular interest during the campaign and did not assume importance until after the opening of the next session of Congress. They were then unexpectedly made prominent by a curious conjunction of events.

The question which was suddenly thrust forward was the old one of the extent to which European countries should be allowed to exert an influence in Central and South America, and the attitude of the United States in view of the so-called Monroe Doctrine, whose meaning was still as obscure as ever. The immediate difficulty was due to the course of Great Britain. That country was assert-

ing rights over not only the Mosquito Coast, but also islands off Honduras. Friction had arisen between Englishmen and Americans at Greytown and shots had been exchanged. Fundamentally the issue involved was the interpretation of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, and the position in which the United States should stand there in connection with the Monroe Doctrine. The constant irritation existing both on the part of Great Britain and our own administration led to a discussion in the Senate, which, instead of being conducted in secret session, was allowed to go on upon the floor in the presence of the galleries. There was considerably more annoyance over the whole situation then than would probably be felt at the present time. This was due to special reasons. The opening of California had raised, in an acute form, the question of a trans-Isthmian route and this, it was believed, should run through Nicaragua, which was largely under the influence of Great Britain. The Clayton-Bulwer treaty, negotiated between England and the United States on April 19, 1850, for the purpose of improving the international situation, was little more than a compromise. Both nations had agreed to cease their efforts to establish a dominating influence in Central America, but the terms of the treaty had been both obscure and unsatisfactory.[1] In favor of the document had been cast, among others, the votes of Webster, Clay, Seward, and Cass, who had all at one time or another shared in the work of the

[1] *Treaties in Force*, 1899, p. 234.

State Department.[1] The differences, therefore, had apparently been settled and to have the trouble break out afresh was alarming in a number of ways. In the Senate the general assumption had been that everything was disposed of by the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, but when the question of British control of the islands off Honduras came up, a new element was brought into the situation. In the course of the debate already referred to, Cass disclosed the fact that before the Clayton-Bulwer treaty had been accepted, the British representative had expressly limited his action, stating that the treaty had no application to Honduras and must not be so interpreted. The announcement was unfortunate because of the suggestion that everything had not been perfectly frank at the time of the ratification of the treaty. Cass said that in his opinion the Clayton-Bulwer agreement had included the Honduran question which now came up as an entirely fresh issue. In order to make the position of the United States clear, however, he offered a resolution designed to define the position of the United States in regard to South and Central America. This was practically a restatement of the Monroe Doctrine. Thus an opportunity was offered for a general debate upon the question of the nation's foreign policy. Could Douglas's "American" system be developed in connection with the settlement of this dispute?

Here at least was an opportunity for a test. In a speech in the Senate he bitterly assailed the

[1] Rhodes, *History*, Vol. I, p. 201.

methods pursued by the administration. He attacked Clayton with vigor for waiving certain privileges, which had been assured to the United States, in regard to a trans-Isthmian canal. Incidentally he struck at Cass and alleged that the Monroe Doctrine was a mere farce, entitled to no respect, since we ourselves did not insist upon attention to its provisions. Of Nicaragua he said that "her appeal to the United States for mediation or protection against British aggression being unheeded—her letters to our government remaining unanswered, their receipt not even acknowledged—her hopes of a closer relation to this Union blasted—the Monroe Doctrine abandoned—the Mosquito kingdom under the British protectorate rapidly absorbing her territory, she sinks in despair, and yields herself to the European partnership which was about to be established over all Central America by the Clayton-Bulwer treaty." Douglas went on to say that, at the time the treaty was ratified in the Senate, he had been dissatisfied with the clause relating to the British protectorate over the Mosquito Coast.[1] He now saw that he had been correct in this position. The Monroe Doctrine was being grossly violated, and violated in such a way as to establish a general principle of partnership between the United States and Great Britain in regard to Central American affairs. This could not be endured, and he himself

[1] *Congressional Globe*, 2d Sess., 32d Cong., p. 941. The salient features of the speech are given in Sheahan's *Douglas*, pp. 100–111.

proposed to stand firmly for the idea of a pure American system, since the whole plan of European colonization rested "upon seizure, violence and fraud." Partisan opponents might sneeringly apply the term "young America" to the effort to uphold the past policy of the Republic, yet he would stand his ground. He went further: for he again adverted to the Cuban question, asserting that, despite the opposition of England or any other power, he should hold himself ready to favor the transfer of Cuba to the United States so soon as Spain should conclude that she could not longer maintain her control over the island.

This argument had been presented on the 14th of February. The session would come to a close on the 4th of March following and Congress would reassemble on the same day. In the meanwhile Clayton had been elected to the Senate and the controversy was immediately reopened. He seized the occasion to repay some of the compliments he had received from Douglas on the 14th of February, and on the 8th or 9th of March he assailed "the Little Giant," as he sneeringly denominated his critic, applying to him in opprobrium the epithet which his devoted followers had bestowed upon him in token of affection. Cass, Mason and others also came in for their share of the rebuke. Douglas as well as his associates hastened to respond. In an address on the 10th of March[1] he reviewed the re-

[1] *Congressional Globe*, 2d Sess., 32d Cong., *Appendix*, p. 257, *et seq.* Also Sheahan, pp. 111–114.

cent history of the foreign policy of the United States, predicted its great future growth, and in flamboyant language attacked the course of those who would have crippled and fettered the nation in its struggle for expansion. It was here, perhaps, that Douglas most plainly and boldly assumed the position of contemptuous defiance of European countries. In so doing, and in mapping out his own particular line of foreign policy, he called down upon himself not only the wrath of Clayton but also of some of his own party associates. These did not hesitate to charge him with unfairness, narrowness, and partisanship. The charge was true and Douglas could not but feel that in taking his extreme position, he had overshot the mark. The debate did not help him particularly, and it may have been that some of the intimations of ignorance on his part concerning European conditions operated to create in his mind a feeling that he would do well to investigate these conditions at first-hand. Whether this was the real cause of his visit to Europe shortly after the adjournment of Congress, or whether he sought merely rest and refreshment is not certain. It would appear, however, that he believed an observation of European conditions on the ground might enable him to speak with more authority. He went rapidly through England and the continent, visiting Russia and various points in Turkey and Asia Minor. It seems hard to believe that this brief vacation could have wrought any real change in the mental character of the man, or

that it could have materially altered his view of public questions. Yet it is apparent that by the time of his return he had quite positively changed the direction of his thought. Perhaps the interval of reflection and absence from the scene of sharp combat had enabled him to look at things in a larger way. Perhaps it had only enabled him to realize more keenly that the foreign question after all could not of itself suffice to stir public feeling in the United States. The issue must be local; it must be national; it must be something that would serve to rouse factional and sectional interest, yet be handled in a way to bind together enough elements to insure the success of the cause. He returned to the United States toward the close of 1853, ready to enter once more upon the campaign for the presidency, and this time with a new issue.

CHAPTER X

THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA STRUGGLE

At the opening of 1854 there were, for the Democratic presidential nomination, at least four principal candidates who had been disappointed in 1852 and whose ambition still remained to be satisfied. Marcy relied upon his record and upon his attitude with respect to Cuba.[1] Buchanan had accepted the English mission, but, despite a letter withdrawing from active politics, few regarded him as thoroughly sincere in this expression. General Cass was looking to the presidency as the representative of the Northwest. Pierce, of course, like every other President, desired a second term. The question before Douglas, as in 1852, was how, by manipulation within the party, to seize the prize and make off with it before the eyes of his four disappointed competitors.

As has already been noted, Douglas had made material progress in consolidating his influence at the South, yet he lacked the hearty support of the Southern politicians. His first marriage, to a Southern woman, had not been taken as sufficient evidence of his complete allegiance to Southern ideals, especially as he had declined the legacy of slaves whose ownership might have passed to him.

[1] Rhodes, *History of the United States*, Vol. I, pp. 423–424.

Douglas's manners and methods still failed to accord with the supposedly aristocratic predilections of Southern leaders, for he was enough of the Western type of politician to like to talk about the humbleness of his beginnings and the fact that he had been a cabinet-maker while a youth. It was apparently indispensable to Douglas that he should overcome the lurking sentiment of distrust which Southerners entertained in regard to him, and should convince them that only by supporting him could they gain a representative who would command Northern and Western votes and would at the same time be sufficiently friendly toward the maintenance of slavery in those parts of the country where it already existed. One hundred and seventeen electoral votes[1] would be accredited to the South in the next national Democratic convention. It was a fair inference, from existing conditions, that no Southerner could get the nomination and Douglas, therefore, regarded himself as essentially the man of the hour. There still remained the need for some issue upon which he could demonstrate conclusively his pro-Southern sympathies, his power to control a substantial following, and his ability to manipulate and mold men to his pleasure. The attempt to develop a characteristic foreign policy had not succeeded, but as chairman of the Committee on Territories Douglas and his friends believed that he could create a situation which he could use to his own advantage. With a dominat-

[1] Rhodes, *History of the United States*, Vol. I, p. 425.

ing power in his own committee and with an intimate acquaintance with territorial questions, it might be possible to make what would probably be a master-stroke for the presidency.

The territory of Nebraska had been seeking organization and a measure providing for the creation of the territory, which had passed the House in the session of 1852–1853, had failed to receive action in the Senate. An identical measure was introduced early in December, 1853, and was of course sent to Douglas's committee where it was pending at the opening of the following January. The question now was what to do with the bill. Immediately after the holiday recess on January 4, 1854, Douglas reported it. In his report, he reviewed the compromise measures of 1850, asserting three fundamental propositions which he said inhered in them. The first was that all questions relating to slavery in the territories, and the new states to be formed therefrom, could be determined only by the decision of the residents of such states. The second was that all cases involving the title to slaves must be dealt with by local tribunals but with the right of appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States. The third was that the provision of the Constitution of the United States regarding fugitive slaves must be faithfully executed in all the organized territories just as in the states themselves.

It seems impossible to avoid the belief that this report was intended to reawaken or at any rate to stimulate the anti-slavery controversy, whose

bitterness had been temporarily allayed. The Missouri Compromise had provided that slavery should not be allowed to exist north of 36° 30′ north latitude, outside of the state of Missouri, yet in this report Douglas now took the view that "in the opinion of those eminent statesmen who hold that Congress is invested with no rightful authority to legislate upon the subject of slavery in the territories" the Missouri Compromise was "null and void." In spite of this alleged view attributed to "eminent statesmen," Douglas did not propose the repeal of the Missouri Compromise; he recommended that the question of slavery, in the face of the terms of that compromise, should be left to the decision of the inhabitants of the territory which it was proposed to organize as Nebraska. Nebraska as then defined included not only the present state of that name but also both North and South Dakota, Kansas, Wyoming, Montana and a part of Colorado. With very nearly half a million square miles of territory and with a white population consisting of but a few hundred settlers and squatters, the territory was as yet a virgin field whose character and industrial development were still to be determined. By setting aside the Missouri Compromise, Douglas proposed to reopen for coming years the agitation over the existence of slavery in this enormous Western region. He thus held out to the Southern states a possibility of gaining, through the exploitation of the West upon slaveholding principles, that final and unquestion-

able domination in the Senate of the United States which they had long desired. He therefore once more opened the bitter dispute which seemed to have been temporarily settled by the acceptance of the Fugitive Slave Law in the North and by the definite determination of the status of slavery in all those regions where it had become established. Under these conditions, it seems not too much to assert that the new proposal was intended to open a road to the presidency which was to be purchased at the heavy cost of renewed sectional warfare.

It has been charged that Douglas sought the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in order that more slave territory might be admitted, and that the slave power might ultimately dominate the Congress of the United States. There is no evidence of a satisfactory character that such was the case. James Ford Rhodes[1] suggests that Douglas might have used the words of Frederick the Great when he began the unjust war against Austria for the conquest of Silesia. "Ambition, interest, the desire of making people talk about me, carried the day, and I decided" to renew the agitation of slavery. This contention has been well and satisfactorily answered by Allen Johnson, one of Douglas's most sympathetic biographers,[2] who shows clearly that Douglas's general principles bound him to the view that slavery in its successful and profitable application was undoubtedly circumscribed by nature. Slavery

[1] *History of the United States*, Vol. I, p. 430.
[2] Johnson, *Life of Douglas*, p. 234.

had proved a failure in New England and in every Northern state in which it had been given a trial. A peculiar type of industry, agricultural and patriarchal in character, had grown up in the South. This "plantation system" had been successful largely because of the rapid expansion of the factory system abroad, resulting as it did in a direct demand for raw products, particularly cotton. Manufacturing had not developed sufficiently in the North to make an effectual demand for Southern products. Thus Southerners fell into the habit of considering their states as a separate "section"—economically far closer to Europe than to the Northern and Western members of the Union. There was no reason why Southerners should have expected the perpetual maintenance of slavery, and in some of the Southern states, notably in Virginia, there was already a vigorous agitation against the peculiar institution, largely on economic grounds, since it was already perceived that slave labor would become decreasingly profitable. To these considerations should be added the fact that Douglas himself was always to an eminent degree guided by motives of temporary validity. He had but little foresight, and few of his policies were framed with a view to their ultimate effect. He had neither the temper nor the nature of the statesman, and he was at all times too open to the claims of personal advantage to be willing to sacrifice immediate gain for the sake of a principle. It was undoubtedly so in regard to the Nebraska bill. Douglas looked

for an immediate issue and he found one in the revival of a controversy whose effects he could not foresee; these he would leave the future to take care of. That the plan was framed with the idea of extending slave territory can hardly be believed. The whole burden of the proof goes to show that it was merely a political manœuvre designed to secure an immediate partisan advantage.[1]

Even the severe critics of Douglas have admitted that there was no scheming between the would-be President and the Southern interests whose support he wished to enlist.[2] There had been no prior consultations. This was the flat and positive assertion of Douglas himself when he said on February 23, 1855, that the bill "was written by myself, at my own house, with no man present." According to his own statement he first secured the approval of representatives of Western interests. Later the Western men sought to get the aid of the Southerners in Congress. The bill almost immediately became highly popular with the Southern element. This fact impressed the anti-slavery party and Northerners generally. The real moving spirit in the legislation was said by some to be Toombs, by others Stephens, and by others Atchison. Atchison, like some more recent legislators, sought the credit for a bill he had never originated, and boasted that Douglas had acted at his dictation.

[1] Cf. A New Explanation of Senator Douglas's Motives, Appendix I, Ray's *Repeal of the Missouri Compromise*, pp. 237–242.
[2] Rhodes, *History*, Vol. I, p. 431.

The Southerners in fact were ready to take the fullest advantage of the alliance now proposed to them, without necessarily committing themselves to make any compensation for the service. They sought to graft upon the measure a provision whereby citizens of any state or territory might take their slaves into any of the territories of the United States or states in future to be created out of these territories. Such an amendment had been offered by Senator Dixon of Kentucky on January 16th, much to the alarm of Douglas, who saw the control of the situation slipping out of his hands, and now perhaps dimly recognized the nature of the tempest he had stirred up.[1]

Dixon did not yield to any of Douglas's urgent requests that he withhold his amendment, notwithstanding the strong and positive representations made by the author of the new bill, who left his seat for that purpose. In response, Dixon admitted that unless the Missouri Compromise was expressly repealed, it would continue to operate in the territory of Nebraska. This was good reasoning, and Douglas now saw himself obliged to accept the logic of the situation by incorporating the amendment. He was moreover driven to this concession through the action of Senator Sumner of Massachusetts, who on January 17th, offered an amendment whereby the slavery clause of the Missouri

[1] Dixon, *True History of the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise*, p. 458, *et seq.* Cf. also Ray, *Repeal of the Missouri Compromise*, p. 210, *et. seq.*

Compromise was positively reaffirmed. In choosing between these two conflicting amendments, Douglas necessarily committed himself to the Dixon plan and therefore accepted the duty of expressly repealing the Missouri Compromise. Thus bound to an extreme view of the Nebraska situation, in spite of his original intent to leave the bill in an ambiguous position which would render it available as a subject for future political jugglery, he saw the need of time for reflection and for the rearrangement of his forces. Opponents felt the same need in respect to their forces. Remarkable interest had been manifested throughout the country at large, and both sides desired to get into touch with their following among the voters. The anti-slavery newspapers were quick to publish articles assuming the existence of a general conspiracy on the part of the slavery men, while opponents were equally ready to take a partisan view. Mingled with the strong and deep undercurrent of feeling about slavery was the effort to use a little of the power thus set free for the purpose of whirling one or another of the rival candidates into the presidential office. Already there had been efforts on the part of others beside Douglas to take advantage of the opportunity, and to get such credit as might come from the new political situation. To gain time, Sumner asked that the bill be deferred until January 31st. Douglas, according to his faithful apologist Sheahan,[1] "acquiesced" in this request, but there is

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 193.

every reason to suppose that he was delighted with the suggestion.

It was now an important question to ascertain the position of President Pierce. Partly because of his open candidacy for a second term in an office which the senator from Illinois wished for himself; partly because of the desire to be the sole leader in the attack on the Missouri Compromise, Douglas had had no word with the President prior to the time that the bill made its appearance on the floor. He now recognized that the struggle which he had precipitated would involve a much more bitter political contest than had been expected. His personal following was evidently not sufficiently strong to control the situation in the House, and he found himself forced to enlist the President, if possible, on his side. The Washington *Union*, the personal organ of President Pierce,[1] had already given approval to the original Douglas bill, while refusing it to the Dixon amendment. Time was growing short and it was determined to bring the issue with the temporizing President to a head at once. Douglas was so fully committed to the extreme Southern element that he resolved to work directly and openly with them. He called for aid upon Jefferson Davis, then the Secretary of War, and Davis agreed to secure a personal interview with President Pierce at a time when they could be undisturbed. Pierce preferred not to transact public business on Sunday, but Davis

[1] Quoted by Rhodes, Vol. I, p. 436.

ventured to disregard this preference, and took Douglas and several others to the White House on the morning of the 22d of January. The bill was read to President Pierce, and the latter finally yielded to the representations of his visitors, endorsing not only the Douglas bill but also the Dixon amendment, and thus committing himself to Davis and the extreme Southern wing of the Senate. Pierce, in fact, felt that a crucial issue had been presented to him, and that to refuse to meet the ideas of the Southerners represented by Davis would enable Douglas and the other aspirants for the presidency to control some support which he deemed necessary to his own political fortunes. Pierce, moreover, was strongly friendly to Davis in a personal way, and saw an opportunity to secure the further approval of the officer upon whom he so heavily leaned.

With the support of the President assured, and with Davis and the Southern element behind him, Douglas prepared to make a decisive step. On the 23d (Monday) he offered a bill to take the place of that which he had first introduced. The new bill positively conceded the points raised by Southern interests. It asserted that the slavery clause of the Missouri Compromise was "superseded," and was therefore "declared inoperative." A division of Nebraska into two territories, the northern to be called Nebraska, the southern Kansas, was a new feature of the plan.

The proposal to create two territories instead of

one is of obscure origin. Some have asserted that the arrangement looked forward to the creation of a slave state and a free state. Others have believed that it was intended to render more easily possible the extension of slavery at a future time, since the slave interest was stronger in the proposed territory of Nebraska than in Kansas. Others have contended that the scheme was designed merely to give better promise to local politicians in adjoining states, and to advance the pretensions of separate Northern and Southern transcontinental railways instead of a single route passing through the centre of the territory. No conclusive evidence seems to be available as to which of these considerations led to the proposed division, although more recent investigators have taken the view that it was the railroad situation, rather than considerations affecting slavery. The bill at all events was satisfactory to the Southern interests, as was evidenced almost immediately upon the floor. A formidable coalition had been brought about, including the personal following of Douglas, the Western interests which liked the proposed measure independent of its slavery feature, the Southern group of senators, and the Pierce administration—the last, however, being counted upon principally for its influence in the House of Representatives. The President at once carried out the first part of what he had bargained to do by inspiring an article in the Washington *Union* in support of the new measure. Under such circumstances, it was plainly necessary

that the anti-slavery men should be looking about them if they expected to prevent the realization of the enemy's plans.

The opposition's call to action was prepared by Chase, Sumner, Giddings and Gerrit Smith who, with two representatives from Ohio and Massachusetts, signed a paper called the "Appeal of the Independent Democrats in Congress to the People of the United States." This was printed in the *Congressional Globe* under date of January 19th, but it was really written on the 23d, at least in part. Its preparation had probably occupied most of the Saturday and Sunday preceding. It was a strong partisan address to the anti-slavery men of the country, based upon the assertion that the Douglas bill would open to slavery all the unorganized territory of the Union. The bill, thought the authors of the "Appeal," was framed in gross disregard of a pledge, and was an effort to cancel an agreement for many years regarded as an inviolable American law, the Missouri Compromise. The "Appeal" was particularly severe in its references to Douglas, and according to the latter's principal biographer "roused the tiger" in him. Whatever may be thought of this euphemistic description, it is certainly true that in his rejoinder on the 30th of January Douglas showed himself at his worst. Not only did he indulge in childish personal taunts directed against the authors of the "Appeal," but he resorted to unfounded and ill-judged efforts to demonstrate the inaccuracy of the historical por-

tions of the document. He was considerably stronger when he passed to a discussion of actual conditions in the Nebraska Territory, and predicted the unsuitability of slavery as a system of industry for that part of the country.

The bitterness of Douglas's rejoinder and the personalities in which he indulged indicated that the supporters of the Kansas-Nebraska bill were by no means so strongly united as some had supposed. In fact, there was already doubt about the wisdom of so extreme a measure. Douglas's speech on the floor was not well received at the time and was described by listeners as "senatorial billingsgate," "intemperate violence," and as "more becoming a pot-house than the Senate."[1] Most of the criticisms at the time came from those hostile to Douglas and friends said little. Apart from the abusive language that had been employed, he had perhaps done about as well as could have been expected under the circumstances. The reply of Chase was considered by Douglas's party as "a lame apology," but the incident, coupled with the popular favor granted to the "Appeal," had alarmed many members of the Northern Democratic party who were personally attached to Douglas. The shrewder Southern men thought it best to take heed and to remain content with what they had in hand without seeking to push slavery farther toward the North. Some concession was

[1] Quoted from contemporary newspapers by Rhodes, Vol. I, p. 445.

deemed wise, and it was finally agreed that a clause should be inserted recognizing that the Constitution was of controlling authority in the matter; no effort would be made to change the constitutional position of slavery. On the 7th of February, therefore, Douglas, yielding to the opinion of his Democratic associates as expressed in caucus, proposed an amendment to the fourteenth section of the bill providing "that the Constitution and laws of the United States, which are not locally inapplicable, shall have the same force and effect within the said Territory of Nebraska as elsewhere within the United States except the eighth section of the Act preparatory to the admission of Missouri into the Union, . . . it being the true intent and meaning of this Act not to legislate slavery into any territory or state, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States."[1] On the 15th this amendment was accepted by a vote of thirty-five to ten. Chase immediately moved to add after the clause already quoted the following words: "Under which the people of the territory through their appropriate representatives may, if they see fit, prohibit the existence of slavery therein." On this proposal, after some discussion, debate continued in general channels until March 2d, when it was rejected. By those who voted against the amendment, it was

[1] *Congressional Globe*, 1st Sess., 33d Cong., p. 421.

urged that no such clause ought to be incorporated because, while it permitted the people of Nebraska to prohibit, it did not allow them to introduce, slavery and was therefore an entirely partisan proposal.

Clayton next sought to secure an amendment to the bill. He had complained that the non-interference of Congress with the affairs of the territory would amount to nothing, if a member of Congress could propose the repeal of any territorial law which might be submitted to the legislative body for its approval. Douglas, therefore, finally proposed to make territorial legislation non-submissible to Congress; but Clayton was still dissatisfied. He moved to deprive all persons within the territory, not fully naturalized, of the privilege of voting, and this amendment was carried against the wish of Douglas by a vote of twenty-three to twenty-one. After a few other minor changes, the bill was reported from the Committee of the Whole. All the amendments made by that committee were concurred in, save only the Clayton amendment which again passed by a recorded vote of twenty-two to twenty. On March 3d the bill was put upon its passage and the debate continued until long after midnight, being adopted at about 5 o'clock on the morning of March 4th by a vote of thirty-seven to fourteen. It then went to the House and was there advanced by the use of the influence of the administration, passing on May 22d by a vote of 113 to 100. From

the House it went directly back to the Senate where it was discussed on the 24th and 25th. Finally the debate was closed by Douglas on the morning of the 26th and the measure was adopted without division.

Douglas had still to hear from the people. He had already been alarmed by the excessive violence of his opponents, and by the vigorous protest that had been received from the country at large. The "Appeal" had aroused an extraordinary amount of sympathy throughout the North and West. Resolutions denouncing the bill had been adopted by the legislature of Rhode Island[1] early in the discussion, while numerous petitions, remonstrances and resolutions from all classes and conditions of men, from societies and associations, and from large bodies of clergymen, had been transmitted to Congress. Douglas was accustomed to such ebullitions and under ordinary circumstances probably would not have noticed them. The expression of public feeling had, however, been so remarkable and insistent that probably no man gifted with the power to recognize public sentiment as he was could have failed to understand the unpopularity of the measure. But he had early seen that there was no way of retreat. He paid little heed to the expressions of Boston anti-slavery agitators or to the burnings in effigy to which he was subjected. He was, however, very much worried about the situation in Chicago. In that city, the testimony of the clergy had been

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 198.

almost unanimously against him. As early as the 27th of March, in a public meeting in Chicago, at which twenty-five clergymen were present, resolutions denouncing Douglas had been passed—in part because of his sneers at the protest submitted to the Senate by more than 3,000 New England clergymen. Douglas thought it worth while to write an elaborate letter in reply, but the fact that he had no newspaper which would act as a personal organ in Chicago made the task of rebutting the current attacks difficult. The press was almost unanimous in denouncing his course. The passage of the bill set him free to attempt to rehabilitate himself.

Congress had adjourned about the 1st of August, and Douglas reached Chicago about the 25th of the month. He there found himself attacked by a vigorous and widely organized opposition which resorted to radical measures for the purpose of venting its displeasure. It seemed necessary to attempt some public reply to the extreme expressions of disapproval with which he had been greeted, and he therefore announced that on the 1st of September he would make an effort to answer his critics. The notice was in the usual form of a promise to address his constituents, and the place named was the square in front of North Market Hall. It would probably have been better if he had waited until public feeling had become somewhat less intense. Hardly had the announcement been made, when absurd stories began to be circulated with reference to the arrangements for the

meeting. Douglas had written to friends outside the city asking as many of them as possible to come to Chicago and be present.[1] But this request, and other utterances of the same sort, were distorted, and it was stated that a substantial body-guard armed and ready to compel silence would attend. There was no evidence that any armed demonstration had been planned. The situation, however, was such as might have been thought to demand something of the kind. Sheahan graphically describes the half-masting of flags and the doleful tolling of the bells of numerous churches as evening closed in. At the appointed hour, Douglas tried to address the mob but the abuse, hisses, outcries and offensive conduct generally were such that he was not able to offer any connected argument. After two hours of effort to get a hearing, he lost the composed and determined manner which had characterized him from the outset and which had had a powerful effect even upon his opponents. He was obliged at last to give up the attempted vindication and with a final outburst of ill-temper, he passed through the hostile crowds to his hotel.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act, brought forward as a political game, had reacted upon its originator and had almost proved his undoing. The law in fact had opened a new phase of Douglas's career, for from this time until the open break with the South he was hopelessly identified with slavery, certainly

[1] Manuscript letter quoted by Johnson, *Life*, p. 258.

in the minds of all his opponents, and to a much larger degree than heretofore in the view of his friends. Rhodes[1] describes the Kansas-Nebraska Act as "the most momentous measure that passed Congress from the day that the senators and representatives first met to the outbreak of the Civil War." The law, he thinks, "sealed the doom of the Whig party; it caused the formation of the Republican party on the principle of no extension of slavery; it roused Lincoln and gave a bent to his great political ambition; it made the Fugitive Slave Law a dead letter at the North; it caused the Germans to become Republicans; it lost the Democrats their hold on New England; it made the Northwest Republican; it led to the downfall of the Democratic party." The historian might add that it also rendered Douglas permanently impossible as a presidential aspirant; placed him in an anomalous position as a pro slavery leader, in defiance of the sentiment of his own state; allied him almost until his death with a losing cause; and committed him to the advocacy of principles which he was obliged later practically to repudiate. The passage of the bill had been almost solely due to Douglas. He alone had had the daring to attempt its adoption in the face of the wishes of the country; only he possessed the skill in political manipulation that made it possible to unite the warring factions in Congress and to throw the administration solidly behind the measure. It was his personal

[1] *History*, Vol. I, p. 490.

achievement; and, as he afterward admitted, he possessed practically the power of a "dictator" during the period of its discussion. This the country could not but recognize and this inevitably determined Douglas's status as a politician during his later life and subsequently his place in history.

"It is interesting to reflect," says one of his personal friends,[1] "upon what might and upon what might not have been, but for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Had that Compromise not been repealed, it is probable that the Democratic party would have gone on in control of the government as it had done so long. In 1856, at farthest in 1860, Stephen A. Douglas would have become President. The old Whig party would still have dragged its lazy length along. Ulysses S. Grant would have continued to weigh raw hides on the back alley of a leather store at Galena, and Abraham Lincoln would have continued to ride the circuit and tell stories in central Illinois. There would have been no Republican party, no secession, and no war."

[1] Carr, *Douglas*, pp. 56–57.

CHAPTER XI

SHIFTING PARTY LINES

It was now plain to all that a rearrangement of party lines was about to occur, and that the issues which had been raised in the course of the Kansas-Nebraska discussion would be the subject of a far greater struggle than any Douglas had anticipated when he decided to reopen the slavery dispute. Short-sighted as he was with reference to large national questions, because of his habitual tendency to underestimate the strength of idealistic influences in human nature, no one ever thought him else than the keenest of analysts of contemporary conditions. He saw that a realignment of voters was imminent; and, simultaneously, he understood that his own position was seriously threatened. The bitterness of his reception in Chicago, the intolerable transition from an atmosphere of political adulation to one of contempt and hatred at once roused in Douglas not only his combative instincts but also a poignant sense of the change in his own immediate political situation. He determined to engage the enemy at once, and to solidify without delay so far as possible the broken ranks of his party. To this end he immediately started upon a speaking tour extending over almost the whole of northern and central Illinois.

What Douglas learned on this tour was most discouraging to him. At least two important political forces were now coming prominently forward. These were the Abolitionists and the so-called Native Americans. The Abolitionists were the product of a trend of thought which Douglas could well understand and estimate. The Native Americans or "Know-Nothings" were a factor in the situation much harder to weigh. Both groups were united in their opposition to Douglas and to all that he represented. The Whigs of course remained a more or less compact body. They would gladly have united with the other two groups, but it was doubtful whether the latter would be willing to merge themselves in the older party. Now for the first time did it appear as if state contentions were to become a direct and important element in national affairs. Here locally was mirrored a movement which later took place upon the larger stage of Federal politics.

The Native American or Know-Nothing party was nominally based upon a desire to restrict foreign immigration and to prevent the domination of aliens (now coming to the United States in large numbers) over men of American birth. As Rhodes conservatively expresses it,[1] "ignorant foreign suffrage had grown to be an evil of immense proportions;" there was, therefore, substantial basis for the general ideas for which the Native Americans stood. But with an element of justice, there had come to be mingled a large element of religious prejudice and

[1] Rhodes, Vol. II, p. 52.

an unreasonable hostility to conditions which were either likely to correct themselves, or were not responsible for the problems which the Native Americans wished to solve. The Know-Nothing party had early committed itself to a crusade against the Roman Catholic Church as the source of most of what was thought to be evil in national affairs, although statistics showed that the Catholics, whatever else might be said of them, were not then settled in America in sufficient numbers to exercise political control. Because of this element of religious antagonism, a kind of secret character was given to the Know-Nothing party and branches with absurd machinery were created in each state. Objectionable methods flourished under such a type of organization and Douglas had perhaps rightly divined that the demonstration against him in Chicago,—flags at half-mast, the tolling of bells, and the uproarious manifestations during the meeting,—had been the work of Know-Nothing emissaries.

The Abolitionists, while not secret in their methods, were as wild in their utterances as were the Native Americans. Garrison had already (early in 1854) burned the Constitution of the United States in public at Framingham, Mass.[1] Disturbances of a similar kind had taken place elsewhere and extreme violence had been displayed on all sides by the anti-slavery men. The fact that many of them had joined the Know-Nothings, combined with the similarity of the methods employed by the two

[1] *Life of Garrison*, Vol. III, p. 412.

bodies, had given Douglas some warrant for declaring on July 4, 1854, that the Know-Nothing movement was nothing more than Abolitionism in an altered form. In this judgment he was probably mistaken—to the extent at least that though anti-slavery ideas were of considerable weight with the Know-Nothing group, it was not the latter's desire to lay special stress upon them for the moment, while to the Abolitionists the question of ending the existing system of slavery was of overwhelming importance, dwarfing everything else. However theories might differ with reference to the composition and relationship of these various groups, it was perfectly plain to all that the formation of a new party, gaining the support of the various scattered and isolated groups, and uniting local disaffected elements for a strong stand against the further extension of slavery was not only possible but almost unavoidable. "Republican" had already been suggested as the name of the new party,[1] and at a gathering at Jackson, Mich., on July 6, 1854, a declaration of principles had been adopted. Most of these "principles" had a bearing upon slavery in some way as was shown in the ticket which was put into the field by the Michigan convention. Five candidates were Whigs, two were Democrats who had opposed the Nebraska bill, and three were anti-slavery men. The future of this new party was still obscure but apparently promising. Its prospect of success lay in continuing to emphasize the one sub-

[1] Stanwood, *History of the Presidency*, p. 260.

ject which constituted a bond of union between the opposition groups, and in bringing home to the people the necessity of presenting a united front if they wished to defeat the Democratic organization. The fate of the Republican party was, however, still quite unknown, and there was yet no certainty that it could become national in its scope.

The elections in the autumn of 1854, while mainly adverse to the Kansas-Nebraska legislation, were various in their meaning ; they differed a good deal from state to state by reason of local conditions and prejudices. This was the general situation ; Illinois formed no exception to the rule. Douglas's early experiences in the northern counties speedily convinced him that his party organization would gain success, if at all, only by the most strenuous efforts. In several congressional districts he found the Democratic candidates very hard pressed, and although a much more friendly reception greeted him in central Illinois, it lacked the spontaneity to which he had become accustomed.

Douglas was especially disturbed by the activity of his future senatorial colleague, Trumbull, and of Abraham Lincoln. Although for five years he had led a life apart from politics because current problems had largely ceased to interest him, Lincoln had been recalled to the struggle through his feeling that now an issue like to none with which he had previously dealt was at hand demanding a settlement.[1] Douglas crossed his path during the campaign and

[1] Oberholtzer, *Abraham Lincoln*, p. 85.

near its end, on October 3, 1854, they met at Springfield for direct personal combat. The debate which ensued was the first real opportunity given to the two men for measuring each other's strength. The issue was plainly drawn between them on the slavery question. Douglas spoke in the State House and on the following day Lincoln answered him at the same place. On the same evening, Douglas appeared in rebuttal, protracting the session of the day to almost six hours. The text of the speeches is lacking, but the testimony of contemporaries is to the effect that Lincoln showed remarkable familiarity with the history of the slavery question. He attacked Douglas's position by presenting a review of the steps by which the existing situation had been brought about. Lincoln had busied himself during the summer in analyzing the Nebraska law. He was well able to find the weak places in his opponent's armor. Somewhat nettled by Lincoln's evident mastery of the subject, and his own consciousness of the nature of the devices by which the bill had been passed, Douglas failed to make a good showing in his rejoinder.[1] He was worn by months of speaking, in an exciting campaign, and by the apparent fact that he was steadily losing ground. The inconclusive character of the result at Springfield led to another passage at arms at Peoria two weeks later. Douglas opened

[1] This is generally conceded by biographers both of Lincoln and Douglas. *Cf.* Oberholtzer, *Lincoln*, p. 88, and Johnson, *Douglas*, p. 266.

the discussion in a three-hour speech, and, after an intermission for supper, Lincoln answered, also occupying three hours. In later years, Lincoln spoke of this address as the ablest he had ever made, while Douglas but little improved on the presentation of the subject which he had offered at Springfield. Lincoln, in fact, with his usual insight, now foresaw the probability of a renewal of the battle with Douglas and with the forces which he represented, and was already preparing himself for such a contest. Douglas was still somewhat contemptuous of an opponent whose ability and popular support he did not fully realize, though he clearly detected a new kind of opposition, since Lincoln did not merely ring the changes upon slavery and its cruelties, but devoted himself to a cold, cutting legal analysis of the basis for slavery and of the action taken in violating the Missouri Compromise. Douglas also found himself bereft of one of his principal weapons, because Lincoln left open few points against which he could aim his shafts of denunciation of Abolitionism. The unsuccessful struggles with Lincoln at Springfield and Peoria, both times in the presence of immense audiences, undoubtedly had much to do with his partial failure at the autumn elections. Opponents of the Nebraska legislation secured five out of nine members of Congress, their total majority in the state on the congressional ticket being over 17,000. They were in control of the legislature, which assured the election of Lyman Trumbull, who had coöperated with Lin-

coln in cutting the ground from under Douglas's feet, as Douglas's colleague in the Senate ; and they had with them the evident sympathy of the people at large. In but one quarter did Douglas's continuous and almost unprecedented efforts result favorably. The Democrats succeeded in electing the state treasurer and some other state officers.

Moreover, the Illinois situation was but one element in a national situation. Iowa had permanently abandoned the Democratic party by electing as governor James W. Grimes, a bitter opponent of the Nebraska legislation. Maine and Vermont sent large anti-Nebraska delegations to Congress, the issue being mainly that of slavery. In Pennsylvania, the Whigs and the anti-slavery Democrats chose a governor through the assistance of the Know-Nothing party and sent an overwhelmingly large anti-Nebraska delegation to Congress. An even more striking outcome was that in Ohio, and elsewhere the results were similar. There could be no doubt that Douglas had wholly failed in his effort to create a winning issue. He had been the unmistakable cause of forcing upon his party the principle which had resulted in its downfall in a great territory where formerly it had been in supreme control. The efforts of Douglas to make it appear that the victory of his opponents was due largely to their junction with the somewhat questionable Know-Nothing party were of little significance, and were thrown into an almost absurd light by the fact that the next House of

Representatives would show a majority of seventy-five votes against the Democrats. The situation and the evident responsibility of Douglas for it, were forces tending strongly to weaken his control of the party, and at times during the succeeding short session of Congress it seemed that he might lose much or all of the immense personal prestige which he had earlier enjoyed in Washington.

From the point of view of Douglas's personal fortunes, probably the most important result which grew out of his unfortunate advocacy of the Nebraska bill, was the fact that at last he appeared to be fully committed to the cause of slavery. If there had been any doubt in the popular mind on this question prior to the election of 1854, foes now left nothing undone whereby they could identify him with the Southern pro-slavery party. Just as he had sought to attach the then odious epithet of Abolitionist to every one who attempted to stand in his way in politics, so opponents now sought to make it appear not only that he was united with the slavery party in sympathy, but also that his personal interests had guided him toward the support of an institution from which he might derive personal profit. There was probably little basis for such charges, because, as we have elsewhere seen,[1] Douglas had refrained from becoming a slaveholder and was far too astute a politician to leave open so manifest an avenue of attack. Yet it was true that the logic of events drove him more

[1] See p. 88, *et seq.*

and more to the side of slavery. His new colleague in the Senate was an anti-slavery man whom he heartily despised. Trumbull had been supported by the Abolitionists and the Know-Nothings. Douglas found himself confronted by groups of opponents who were united by the single fact of hostility to slavery. He himself had formed family associations with slave-owners, was on friendly terms with the slavery party in Congress, and, though he knew it to be a weakness among his own constituents, his own type of mind inclined him more and more to the acceptance of the general philosophy by which the slavery advocates were dominated. More and more he had allowed his early Democratic principles to slip into the background; more and more he had become involved in the attempt to justify distinct party measures rather than to expound clear party principles.

Perhaps the bitterest element, to Douglas, in a bitter situation was the fact that to him, more than to any other man in public life, must now be ascribed the responsibility for the development whereby a new party of protest, embodying all of the opposition elements and bearing the objectionable name "Republican," had been founded. The name had been more and more generally recognized throughout the latter half of 1854 and the early part of 1855, as the most available designation for the new party. It was recognized that party organization and the acceptance of popular issues were necessary in order to maintain the start which had been so auspiciously

made through Douglas's overplaying his hand in 1854. Almost at once, clever leaders set to work to bring about a higher state of discipline than had yet been possible. In this, they were considerably aided by circumstances. The Know-Nothing party, pleased with the showing made in the fall of 1854, held toward the end of the year at Cincinnati[1] a national council, but the very growth of the group called down upon it opposition from some who had begun to fear its special and peculiar proclivities. One or two unfavorable elections early in 1855 preceded another meeting of the Council at Philadelphia. There the slavery question was bitterly discussed, the debate resulting in a breach between the Northern and Southern wings of the organization. This tended to drive the Northern section into the ranks of the Republicans. Anti-slavery men of the more reasonable type also began to give their allegiance to the Republican party as the most available means of pushing forward their ideas, even though the progress made by the party along their lines was not sufficiently rapid to please them. Beside this tendency it was now notable that the Whig party was losing ground, and that its branches were gradually dying and falling off. Lines of cleavage between the Republican party and the extreme Abolition group on the one hand, and the reactionary elements among the Whigs and Know-Nothings on the other, were daily growing more and more evi-

[1] Rhodes, *History*, Vol. II, p. 87 ff.

dent, while Northern Democrats were, in many instances, recognizing the Republican party, for the time being at least, as the party of progress and the only body to which they could look for the presentation of their ideas in moderate form, in opposition to the compact slavery interest. It was under such conditions that the presidential nominating conventions rapidly approached.

Douglas had been slow to accept the designation of Republican for the new party. He attacked it bitterly on the floor,[1] noting that the party was tending to drop the word "national"; he suggested the substitution of the word "black" on the ground that it substantially represented the idea of negro equality and of Abolition. But long before the nominating conventions met, Douglas had come to understand his mistake and to recognize the new party as a genuine political factor with which he must reckon. This he was at last ready to do. In fact, it seemed to many that despite his apparent failure to see his blunder in connection with the Nebraska Act, he must continue his leadership. He who had brought the party to its present difficult straits could best extricate it. He had originally embarked upon the experiment of the Nebraska Act through a desire for a presidential issue. He was not now minded to forego his purpose. He looked eagerly, therefore, to the national convention which was to meet on June 2, 1856, hoping that it would vindicate him by giving him

[1] *Globe*, 34th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 390, *et seq.*

the nomination for the presidency. The outcome was a severe disappointment. At the outset, support was considerably divided. Buchanan had 135 votes, Pierce 122, Douglas thirty-three, and Cass five. Douglas's maximum strength was exhibited on the fifteenth ballot when he received 118 votes against Buchanan's 168. Douglas had, however, taken most of the Southern votes of his rivals and it was plain to all of his supporters that he had done his utmost. The party stood waiting for the rivals to sink personal prejudice and personal interest, and this Douglas reluctantly concluded to do after the sixteenth ballot. At that time a dispatch from him announced his withdrawal, and practically transferred his votes to Buchanan, action which was now unavoidable and was the less gracefully taken on that account.[1]

An analysis of the balloting in the convention seems to indicate a recognition on the part of the delegates that under the lead of Douglas they had gone much too far along the lines laid down by the slavery party. The party as a whole not only turned from Douglas's personality, at length so thoroughly and so unfortunately identified with extreme slavery views, but it selected one who had already pledged himself to moderation if not almost to opposition to Douglas. Buchanan had undertaken to see that Kansas was fairly treated, while some believed that he looked forward to the admis-

[1] Rhodes, *History*, Vol. II, p. 171, *et seq.* and Stanwood, *History of Presidential Elections*, pp. 199–200.

sion of the territory as a free state. He had the favor of New England Democrats and was not unfavorably regarded by some of the aristocratic element in the South. On his first ballot in the nominating convention he had received the votes of all the delegates from Virginia and Louisiana. He was more available than Douglas because he had made fewer enemies; but more significant than this was the fact that he also represented the conservative element which had been antagonized by the Nebraska Act and which believed that Douglas had injured the position of the party.

It was doubtless even more displeasing to Douglas to realize that while the party turned away from him in its convention, it laid down a platform which was intended to satisfy the Southern element, and to avoid the charge that the party had deserted the principles to which its foremost leaders had been committed during the Nebraska contest. This action, of course, still left Douglas a possible candidate for the future, since it approved the position he had taken and to that extent it was gratifying. Buchanan, in fact, in his speech of acceptance, endorsed the platform and expressed sentiments which were satisfactory to the Southern delegates who had voted for him. He asserted that the slavery question was "paramount" and he believed that the Kansas-Nebraska Act had furnished a necessary supplement to the Compromise of 1850. This view, formally expressed, was further extended in private conversation, and thus Douglas

had at least the satisfaction of seeing the party recognize the principle which he had sought to make dominant and continue to advocate the policy which he more than any one else had sought to develop and to render coherent. Douglas himself was thus left with practically nothing to say. Although unused to defeat, he had always been the most outspoken advocate of those views which place party regularity before everything else. It was not possible for him, then, to utter a word against a convention which had sinned only in refusing to accept his personality. Moreover, his future was now bound up with that of the party. He pledged himself unequivocally to Buchanan and was apparently content with retaining his position as the foremost Democratic leader, notwithstanding that the party was now nominally headed by another.

The action of the Republicans in their national convention at Philadelphia in nominating Frémont and denouncing "polygamy and slavery" was not happy, while Fillmore, nominated some time previously as a Native American, and endorsed by other minor groups, tended to draw off the support which should have gone to Frémont. In this way the election of Buchanan was made unavoidable. After the Republican convention had separated, it was safe to guess that the Democrats would remain in control of the government, notwithstanding the enthusiasm and excitement which marked the campaign of the new party. Buchanan was declared

elected by 174 electoral votes, while Frémont received 114 and Fillmore but eight. Buchanan's popular vote was 1,838,169 and that of Frémont 1,341,264, while Fillmore had 874,534.[1] Thus it was true that the Democracy remained by far the largest political group in the community though a junction of all the opposing elements would have defeated it. To prevent such a junction was plainly the problem of the party leaders, and it was with this problem distinctly in mind that Douglas entered upon a new period of his political life. Though it had been clear that the Republicans were not yet in a position to win the presidency, it was also clear that a continuance of existing conditions would render the continuance of the Democrats in power out of the question. This made it necessary to see how far the Democratic party, now so largely dominated by the pro-slavery element, could maintain itself in national politics upon that basis, and whether the party, if it should attempt to modify its position, could do so without alienating from it the Southern element which was identified with a strong pro-slavery policy at Washington. Now for the first time, perhaps, was it clear to Douglas that the slavery question must be dealt with definitely in the near future, and that upon this question hung not only all his personal chances of advancement but also all the prospects of his party as a national force. Slavery prior to the manifestation of Repub-

[1] Rhodes, *History*, Vol. II, p. 235 and Stanwood, *History of Presidential Elections*, p. 210.

lican strength had not been identical with Democratic party existence. The need of concession to the Northern Democrats, dissatisfied as they were with the inroads of the slavery element in Congress, had been abundantly established by the outcome at the polls, since it was plain that the loss of the Northern men whose following had been secured by the selection of Buchanan might have led to defeat. To the old-line leaders of the Democratic party, this situation gave much ground for anxiety, and Douglas himself, confronted with the hostility of his own state on the slavery question, undoubtedly felt that he must guide his steps with great care unless he were willing to be isolated politically, perhaps to be retired from the Senate, and therewith to lose his chances of the presidential succession. A retrograde movement, or at all events a refusal to advance further along the extreme line of attack, into which he had been led by his advocacy of the Nebraska law, was becoming almost imperative.

CHAPTER XII

THE ADMISSION OF KANSAS

THE unfriendly reception accorded to Douglas upon his return to his adopted state, and the reverses which both his party and he personally had met with in the course of the fall campaign had been merely the forerunners of a difficult experience in Congress. Douglas understood, by the end of November, that the Kansas-Nebraska Act had created a tumult, and that its consequences could not be evaded, even if he were willing to retreat from the attitude which he had assumed. A position had been taken and the party must press forward along the line which had been indicated. The question was still open how far it should go, and what should be its plan of action with respect to the problems immediately facing it, but it was not possible to escape the issue which the Kansas-Nebraska Act forced upon the Democratic party. Douglas was therefore confronted with the task of putting into operation the law which he had personally driven through Congress. The difficulty was the more genuine in that the measure was one which could not be allowed to rest as a dead letter. It dealt with the most active and most controverted question of the day, and this must be further dis-

posed of by a Congress in which one house was under the control of the opposition.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act, as has been seen, had provided for the erection of two territories, Kansas and Nebraska. As we have noted,[1] there were various interpretations of the causes of this two-fold organization, among them one which found the division to be the fruit of a desire to secure the admission of one territory, ultimately, as a free state, and the other as a slave state. Whether such an idea was cherished by Douglas or not, it did gain a place in the minds of many pro-slavery men. With affairs in this unsettled position, the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act opened the way to a great tide of immigration into the new territories. The settlers had been held back by treaties with the Indians, but at last all obstacles were removed and the population of the great domain, which had been placed at the disposal of the land-seeking immigrants, rose steadily. It was necessary to organize governments in both territories. The situation had been rendered the more difficult by the introduction of conflicting elements of population. In July, 1854, a party had started from New England with the avowed object of making Kansas a free state. This company consisted of 500 emigrants, who were later followed by additional parties numbering 2,500 more.[2] Other bands of settlers came from elsewhere

[1] See p. 198.

[2] Thayer, *The Kansas Crusade*, p. 170, *et seq.*; also Rhodes, *History*, Vol. II, p. 78.

in the North and this led to an effort in western and northern Missouri to offset the movement. Secret organizations were formed in that state with the idea of extending slavery into Kansas. Settlers began to pass over the border and soon the material was at hand for a sharp struggle. Edwin Reeder had been designated by the President as governor of the territory,[1] and his arrival was almost simultaneous with the entry of the new and hostile groups of colonists. Feeling was running high. It was not true that there had been an effort on the part of the New England men to prepare for actual warfare by arming their pioneers, but their admitted and concerted effort to gain control by settling enough men in the state to carry the territorial elections, had led to threats of violence on the part of the secretly organized pro-slavery men in Missouri. Reeder's arrival encouraged the Missourians, and was correspondingly disheartening to the New England immigrants. He was strongly Southern in his principles and fully believed in the idea underlying the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Moreover, he had already committed himself to the opinion that the main source of trouble in the territory would be found in the New England settlers. The election of a territorial delegate took place on November 29, 1854. Whitfield, the candidate of the Missourians, was chosen, a result which was brought about by importing a large number of pro-slavery voters from across the line. The situation attracted very little attention, com-

[1] On November 29, 1854.

paratively speaking, in other parts of the country, because the act under which the election was held extended the ballot to all male inhabitants of free birth and of the white race, twenty-one years of age and over, who were living in the territory at the time of the election though not necessarily at the time of the passage of the act.

In the spring of 1855, however, the issue was much more sharply drawn in connection with the choice of a territorial legislature. An army of 5,000 Missourians marched into Kansas to aid in electing their candidates, and distributed themselves over the doubtful districts.[1] The New Englanders saw their chances of success disappearing, although the governor sought to prevent fraud so far as the difficult conditions permitted. Moreover, he gave only three weeks' notice of the election, which was to occur on March 30th, thus curtailing as much as possible the time within which the outside voters could recross into Kansas. The current of Missouri influence was, however, far too strong to permit of its being resisted, and the pro-slavery candidates were returned to the legislature by a large majority. Where doubt as to the result arose, new elections were ordered by the governor, but these were rendered of no avail by the action of the pro-slavery managers in seating the bulk of original candidates.[2] In complete control of the legislature, the pro-slavery men immediately proceeded to enact a series

[1] Rhodes, *History*, Vol. II, p. 81; Spring, *Kansas*, pp. 44–47.
[2] Spring, *Kansas*, p. 50, *et seq.*

of extreme laws, and Reeder, who had been strongly friendly to the slavery side because of his difficult and hazardous experience during the winter and spring, 1854–1855, now completely shifted his position. He came back to the East and told his story to the President, while the New England element in Kansas called a series of conventions for the purpose of drafting a constitution in opposition to slavery and applied for admission to the Union as a free state.

Reeder was superseded and the case was now before Congress. Douglas had been detained at home, but he reached Washington not long after the opening of the session of 1855–1856. He found that President Pierce had already sent two messages to Congress in which he had discussed the Kansas situation.[1] In his annual message, he had laid down the rule that resistance to territorial law must and would be promptly suppressed ; while on January 24th, in a special message, he had upheld the Kansas-Nebraska Act which he said made it clear that the general provision for political organization of the territories lay within the powers of the Federal government, and that the inhabitants of any territory had the right to determine what should be their local laws, subject only to the Constitution of the United States. He referred to the action of the New England men who had drafted a constitution of their own, and recommended that the inhabitants

[1] *Messages and Papers of the Presidents of the U. S.*, Vol. V, pp. 342 and 352 ff.

be authorized to form a state government and to seek admission to the Union whenever they became sufficiently numerous to elect delegates to a convention called for that purpose.

Douglas had not been able to present himself in the Senate until the 11th of February. He resumed his place at the head of the Committee on Territories. In a month he was ready to report upon the Kansas situation apropos of the recommendations of the President and of various documents which had been transmitted to his committee. His report, and a speech accompanying it, offered a complete history of Kansas affairs as well as a discussion of the power of Congress over the territories. The minority submitted its report also. This was followed by a bill which Douglas reported on the 17th of March, authorizing the people of the territory to form a constitution and state government, and, on the 20th, by a speech in support of the bill. The debate was opened in good earnest by a sharp personal encounter between Douglas and his colleague, Trumbull, who had taken occasion to speak upon the report in the absence of Douglas, and continued until June 25th. Mr. Seward had introduced a bill which he offered as a substitute for the Douglas bill and in which he proposed to admit Kansas as a state under the anti-slavery constitution drafted at Topeka. Several other bills had been proposed by various members, but on June 25th Senator Toombs of Georgia offered a substitute for all bills then pending and the whole set of measures was referred

back to the Committee on Territories for consideration. On the 30th of June Douglas made a report in which he accepted the Toombs bill as a general substitute, and reopened the debate, the measure passing at 8 o'clock A. M. on July 3d, after a twenty-hour session.

It was during this protracted debate, covering the whole of the spring and early summer of 1856, that Douglas's theory of popular sovereignty and territorial rights received its most authoritative and clear-cut exposition. In his first report of March 12th, he had defended the Kansas-Nebraska Act upon familiar grounds, and had made the point with considerable force that Congress could not impose on any territory restrictions which would prevent it from becoming a state upon the same terms and with the same privileges as were enjoyed by other states. He could not, therefore, believe that Congress could admit a territory which had been organized with the previous understanding or requirement that there should not be slavery or any other system of labor within its borders. The speech of March 20th went farther than the report, and discussed the general question of slavery, as well as its special status in Kansas. Much of the discussion contained in the report was devoted to a more or less partisan and very detailed view of events in the territory. The portions of it which were of most interest, however, did not deal with current politics but sought to present the speaker's theory of the broader question at issue. "The leading

idea and fundamental principle of the Kansas-Nebraska Act as expressed in the law itself," he noted, "was to leave the actual settlers and *bona fide* inhabitants of each territory 'perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way subject only to the Constitution of the United States.'"[1] The restrictions of the Constitution, he held, were "few, specific and uniform, applicable alike to all the states old and new. There is no authority for putting a restriction upon the sovereignty of a new state which the Constitution has not placed on the original state. Indeed if such a restriction could be imposed on any state, it would instantly cease to be a state within the meaning of the Federal constitution, and in consequence of the inequality, would assimilate to the condition of a province or dependency."

In examining the extent of the prerogatives or sovereign rights of the several states, Douglas urged that "African slavery existed in all the Colonies under the sanction of the British government prior to the Declaration of Independence. When the Constitution of the United States was adopted, it became the supreme law and bond of union between twelve slaveholding states and one non-slaveholding state; each state reserved the right to reserve the question of slavery for itself, to continue it as a domestic institution as long as it pleased, and to abolish it when it chose."[2] The report took a

[1] Senate Report, No. 34; 1st Sess., 34th Cong., p. 39.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

view adverse to the anti-slavery party in Kansas, and sought to avert the threatened conflict there by recommending that the holding of a constitutional convention be deferred until "the territory contains 93,420 inhabitants, that being the number required by the present ratio of representation for a member of Congress." The speech of the 20th of March developed these same ideas and included a running colloquy of the keenest kind between Douglas, Seward and Sumner. Douglas went back to the compromise legislation of 1850, and attempted to make good the historical and constitutional position which he had then taken. This, however, was more by way of controversy than anything else, for his speech did not add materially to the value of the argument already developed in his report, although he rebutted with unusual skill the cutting criticisms of his opponents. Sumner now came into remarkable prominence because of his success in replying to Douglas, and because of the special vigor and effectiveness with which he met Douglas's peculiar style of oratory. The conflict between Douglas and Sumner became very bitter and finally degenerated into personal criticism and retort. In fact the acrimony during the weeks succeeding Douglas's opening speech fairly surpassed anything that had ever been displayed on the floor of the Senate. Sumner charged Douglas with being a "squire of slavery, its very Sancho Panza," and, after his personal objurgations, asserted that Douglas's report and speech showed

that their author had "constrained himself . . . to unfamiliar decencies of speech."[1] This excessively bitter onslaught had been induced by constant offensive comment directed personally against himself, charging among other things that he was guilty of the manufacture of stories about Kansas for his own ends. Douglas, in answering, asserted that Sumner's insulting references had been drafted at leisure, practiced, and prepared in order to make the proper impression. He succeeded in turning against Sumner the laughter and ridicule of many of the members of the Senate, and the incident closed with offensive epithets and taunts on both sides. Storey, the secretary and biographer of Sumner, quotes the correspondent of a Missouri newspaper who was probably no over-friendly critic, to the effect that Sumner "was abused and insulted as grossly as any man could be, but he replied successfully to the unmeasured vituperation of Douglas, and the aristocratic and withering *hauteur* of Mason."[2] Conflict between Sumner and Douglas seemed to be in certain prospect when Brooks of South Carolina made his nearly murderous

[1] Storey, *Life of Charles Sumner*, American Statesmen Series, 1900, p. 140.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 144. The correspondent wrote as follows: "That Sumner displayed great ability and showed that in oratorical talent he was no unworthy successor of Adams, Webster, and Everett, no one who heard him will deny. In vigor and richness of diction, in felicity and fecundity of illustration, in breadth and completeness of view, he stands unsurpassed. . . . In his reply to Cass, Douglas, and Mason, who stung him into excitement, he was more successful than

assault upon the senator from Massachusetts,[1]—an incident for which, fortunately, Douglas was wholly free of responsibility.

As finally reported by Douglas and passed by the Senate, the Toombs bill had made some concession to the opposing sentiment which, it was recognized, was running so high that further hostilities would be unwise. The measure had carried with it a provision that there should be a census of the population of Kansas, and that delegates to a constitutional convention should be elected subsequent to the taking of the census. In order to assure fairness, it was provided that the President should select five men whose choice should be ratified by the Senate. These men were then to make the enumeration and see that the population which it indicated was duly registered for voting. When this had been done, an election by these duly registered voters was to be held on the same date as the November presidential election. Granting the general position of Douglas, it was evident that these provisions were essentially just; the only question was whether the commissioners would be fairly and disinterestedly chosen. And on this point the attitude already adopted both by Douglas and by the President might give rise to reasonable

at any other time. The collision knocked fire from him; and well it might, for he was abused and insulted as grossly as any man could be; but he replied successfully to the unmeasured vituperation of Douglas, and the aristocratic and withering *hauteur* of Mason."

[1] See p. 143.

doubts. Such doubts were entertained by the opposition, and were in some instances directly voiced by them, although the measure, as already noted, was finally passed—the vote standing thirty-three to twelve.

Meantime, however, the House of Representatives, dominated by the opposition, had passed a bill for the admission of Kansas on the same day on which the Senate acted—the vote standing ninety-nine to ninety-seven. This action sent the House bill to the Senate Committee on Territories, whence it was reported on the 8th of July with an amendment resubstituting the Senate bill (the Toombs bill), while in the House the measure sent there by the Senate (the Toombs bill) was tabled. Douglas's report to the Senate with reference to the House bill explained and criticized that measure. The House, however, deferred all action until the 29th of July when a new measure was substituted for a relatively unimportant bill annulling certain acts of the legislative assembly of Kansas that had been pending. This substitute, the so-called Dunn Bill, was brought before the House by a special parliamentary manœuvre, and the title was made to read "an act to reorganize the territory of Kansas, and for other purposes." The measure received an almost unanimous vote from the House Republicans and was without doubt an extraordinary and extreme proposal offered for purely party purposes. After a long delay, during which Douglas had time on the 11th of August to

report against this new form of the House plan, the effort to secure any sort of compromise was abandoned and Congress adjourned without action on the subject.

Just at the juncture when Douglas was most keenly feeling the consequences of his course on the Kansas-Nebraska question, his position had been rendered even more difficult by the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the so-called Dred Scott case. This decision was a sorry blow for Douglas, so much so that by some it is coupled with the accession of James Buchanan to the presidency—two fatal events in this period of his career. Dred Scott was a negro who had several years before sued for his own freedom and for the freedom of his family from slavery. The case drifted through the lower courts, and finally, after the customary tedious delays, worked its way to the Supreme Court. Its interest was entirely constitutional and impersonal, because it had been brought up as a test case and because Dred Scott and his family, after being enslaved by order of the Supreme Court, were freed by their owner, a congressman from Massachusetts. It raised two important issues: the one whether a negro whose progenitors had been slaves could be a citizen of any state in the United States; the other whether the Missouri Compromise was constitutional.

Dred Scott came of slave parents and had spent most of his life in Missouri. Afterward his owner took him to Minnesota where he lived for two years.

The Missouri Compromise had prohibited slavery in that part of the country and hence arose the question whether a negro slave who had lived there two years had gained his freedom. Connected with this was the question whether Congress could prohibit slavery in the territories.[1] The importance of the case was quickly seen and the Supreme Court was placed under very heavy pressure, the result being that the court hesitated and discussed the issue in an almost unprecedented way. There was no suggestion of any irregular or illegitimate influence, but it was an undoubted fact that the personal sympathies and sectional prejudices of the justices, five of whom were Southerners, were actively aroused. Chief-Justice Taney delivered the opinion of the court on the 6th of March, 1857. He held that negroes were not included as citizens under the Constitution, hence could claim no constitutional immunities. Furthermore, Congress had never been warranted in passing the Missouri Compromise Act which was therefore invalid.[2] Dissenting opinions were presented, but there was no doubt about the meaning of the opinion of the majority of the court.

It was no wonder that the decision was received with joy by the pro-slavery Democrats who immediately printed and distributed it as a campaign document. To Douglas, who had fought fiercely on

[1] *Cf.* Rhodes, Vol. II, pp. 251–264.

[2] Supreme Court Reports, Dred Scott *v.* Sandford, 19 Howard p. 393, *et seq.*

the basis of the Missouri Compromise, the decision came as a severe blow. His often-repeated principle of obedience to a mandate of the Supreme Court must now, however, determine his course. He saw that he must accept and seek to vindicate the action of the court. Because of this decision, he argued, there was the more reason why stress should be placed upon the necessity of preserving the absolute power of the inhabitants of a given region to determine what their position with reference to slavery should be. Since the Supreme Court had thrown to the winds the basis upon which the geographical extension and restriction of slavery had been founded, there remained now as the sole guide the disposition of the inhabitants of any territory, as recorded in their constitutions and laws. For Congress to attempt to control would henceforward more than ever be unconstitutional and unwise. In every case the decision must be made to depend upon the carefully ascertained views of the voters.

The situation in Kansas meanwhile had remained unsettled and unsatisfactory. President Buchanan had sent Robert J. Walker of Mississippi to the state as governor. Walker had arrived there on the 26th of May, 1857, and published an inaugural address which had previously been submitted to both Douglas and Buchanan. As a Southern man he would gladly have seen Kansas a slave state, but as a fair-minded man he recognized that this

[1] Rhodes, Vol. II, p. 273.

was out of the question. Only about two or three hundred slaves were now in the territory and it was the belief of Walker that, by making Kansas a free state, it would be possible to unite the opposing factions in a way that would nevertheless give its votes to the Democratic party, and would consequently place the state in the Senate on the side of the Southern group. Walker urged all good citizens to join in the election of June 15th, which was to name delegates to a constitutional convention, but with meagre result; for the men who believed in the anti-slavery doctrine practically refused to respond to the appeal of the governor, so that only a small percentage, less than one-quarter of the total number of registered voters, cast ballots. Those who did vote were largely pro-slavery advocates, and the men whom they elected were of course of their own way of thinking. The outcome was the choice of a convention strongly biased in one direction, and from which little that was satisfactory to the men who had foolishly refrained from participating in the election could be expected.

The Free-Soil men saw their error too late, and set themselves earnestly to work to control the autumn elections at which a territorial legislature was to be chosen. In this effort they were successful, electing a large majority of members, and thus the singular condition existed that, though a pro-slavery constitutional convention had been chosen, an anti-slavery legislature was in control of the affairs of the territory. It had become apparent to

most of the cooler-headed pro-slavery men, as it had to Governor Walker, that the sentiment of the state would not endorse a pro-slavery constitution. The convention, however, proceeded along its own lines, and a trick was relied upon to avoid a defeat when the constitution should be submitted to popular vote. Meeting at a place called Lecompton, in September, the convention had reassembled after the election, on the 19th of October, under the protection of Federal troops. In the final draft of the document appeared this clause: "The right of property is before and higher than any constitutional sanction and the right of the owner of a slave to such slave and its increase is the same and as inviolable as the right of the owner of any property whatever." The constitution could not be amended until after 1864, and even at that time there was to be no alteration that would "affect the rights of property in the ownership of slaves." The election was to take place on December 21st when the people might vote for the "constitution with slavery, or the constitution with no slavery." There was to be no opportunity to vote against the constitution, and even if the "constitution with no slavery" received a majority, the situation was not hopeless from slavery's point of view. It was provided simply that slavery should "no longer exist in the state of Kansas, except that the right of property in slaves now in this territory shall in no measure be interfered with." [1]

[1] Rhodes, Vol. II, p. 279.

This action of the Lecompton convention brought to a head all those elements of disorder which had been temporarily scattered in Kansas. The scheme was recognized throughout the Union as one of those contemptible tricks, common in American politics and too patiently endured, contrived for the object of advancing some temporary or local cause. In this instance, however, it was the general opinion that the ruse affected matters of too great moment to be accepted either in Kansas itself or anywhere throughout the Union. Governor Walker denounced the scheme as "a vile fraud, a base counterfeit, and a wretched device;" [1] while all the decent people of Kansas, whether anti-slavery or pro-slavery in sympathy, exerted every effort to bring about the rejection of the proposition, thus avoiding the necessity of submitting to a scheme which had been prepared in this dishonest way.

The real nature of the trick had been hidden for a time from the eyes of the country, owing partly to the limited means then available of transmitting intelligence. During the time that the true situation was thus obscured, some ground had been regained by the Democrats, who had won pretty generally at the autumn elections (1857), and were nervously anxious not to sink back into the gulf of defeat. As soon as the facts began to leak out, as they did about the time that Congress assembled, there was an immediate outburst of public opinion. Throughout the northern section of the Democratic

[1] Rhodes, Vol. II, p. 280.

party, the Lecompton plan was denounced; even some of the most hide-bound partisans declared that it was not to be tolerated. In Illinois particularly, there was strong sentiment against the action of the convention, and pressure was put upon Douglas to oppose it. He would thereby separate himself from the extreme pro-slavery group to which he had become an ally and commit himself to the views and policies of the Northern Democrats and the moderate slavery men.

Thus a most serious alternative was placed before Douglas. During the past two years he had already seen his personal power in Illinois wavering, due to the general feeling that he had gone too far in his advocacy of the wishes of the slavery party in Congress. Yet should he now break with those who were endeavoring to make Kansas a slave state? If he should do so, would he not thereby forfeit the support of what was possibly the most closely organized body of men in Congress? Would he not hopelessly alienate friends and retainers who were necessary in the approaching presidential contest upon which his attention was now fixed? The choice was difficult, and it was rendered more so by reason of the intellectual complexities which beset him. He had advocated the right of citizens of the state to settle the slavery question as they pleased. The constitutional convention had been elected, although by a minority of the voters. Why should there be outside interference intended to prevent the inhabitants from dealing with their own prob-

lems as they saw fit? On the other hand, if this constitution, with its double faced provision as to slavery, should be foisted upon the people, would the real spirit and meaning of the Kansas-Nebraska legislation be maintained? Douglas was particularly embarrassed by the fact that he had already spoken in public on several occasions, eulogizing the action of Walker and asserting that the President would unquestionably carry out the spirit of the Kansas-Nebraska act in every detail.

Difficult as was the situation, there could be but one logical outcome. If Douglas now adopted a course of action which would reduce his personal popularity in his own state and perhaps deprive him of its direct support, he would lose an indispensable asset in his presidential aspirations. It was unfortunate to have to break with the extreme wing of his Southern support, but this was a loss that might possibly be overcome, while to cut the ground from beneath his own feet at home would be impossible. He decided upon a positive course, calculated to resist and condemn the action of the Lecompton convention, and in this mind he started for Washington in December, 1857, first giving out, at Chicago, a statement that he would oppose the pro-slavery scheme. Douglas, nevertheless, was not disposed to go unnecessarily far in the rôle of reformer. On reaching Washington he hastened to the White House and communicated his views to Buchanan. Buchanan, beset by some of the same doubts and embarrassments which had harassed

Douglas, but directed by no such imperative necessity as had governed the action of the senator from Illinois, told the latter that he intended to throw his influence to the side of the slavery advocates and of the Lecompton convention. Douglas remonstrated, without avail. What happened at the interview has been variously described, but there is no difference regarding the main features. According to Nicolay and Hay[1] "Buchanan insisted that he must recommend it" [the Lecompton constitution] "in his annual message. Douglas replied that he would denounce it as soon as it was read. The President excited, told him 'to remember that no Democrat ever yet differed from an administration of his own choice without being crushed. Beware of the fate of Tallmadge and Rives.' 'Mr. President,' retorted Douglas, 'I wish you to remember that General Jackson is dead.'" Douglas had thus definitely accepted the idea of a breach with Buchanan, whose weakness and reactionary tendencies he correctly estimated.[2] He

[1] *Abraham Lincoln, A History*, 1890, Vol. II, p. 120.

[2] Flint, *Douglas*, pp. 91 92 says: "The President, however, would tolerate no difference of opinion among friends on this question. Upon the tariff—upon specific and ad valorem duties—upon the Pacific Railroad—upon the Homestead Bill—upon the Neutrality Laws—and, indeed, on any and every other question, Democratic senators and representatives, and cabinet officers, were at liberty to think and act as they pleased, without impairing their personal or political relations with the President. But on the Kansas question, having determined to abandon the principles and reverse the policy to which he had pledged the administration and the party, he regarded Mr. Douglas's refusal to follow him in his change of principles and

himself had no mind to become the champion of a losing cause, for success was now his cardinal principle, and he had none of the Bourbon spirit which carried the extreme Southern slavery party forward even to the shedding of blood. He was as good as his word, and hardly had Buchanan sent in a message in which he weakly indicated[1] that in case the Lecompton constitution was presented he would advise the admission of Kansas under its provisions, when Douglas on the following day (December 9th) instituted a bitter attack upon that constitution, and incidentally upon the President.[2] After some rather scathing remarks directed at Buchanan and his recommendations, he restated the principle of the Kansas-Nebraska bill as having been that of treating the slavery question like every other, and consequently of leaving it to the inhabitants of each and every would-be state to settle for themselves. This idea had been violated by the Lecompton convention which proposed to "force . . . down the throats of the people of Kansas, in opposition to their wishes and in violation of our pledges, a constitution which was repug-

policy as a serious reflection upon his own conduct. All freedom of judgment and action was denied. Implicit obedience to the behests of the President was demanded. The senator was required to obey the mandate of the Executive, instead of to represent the will of his constituency. The representatives of the states and of the people were required to surrender their convictions, their judgments and their consciences to the Executive, and to receive instructions from him instead of them."

[1] *Messages and Papers*, Vol. V, p. 471.

[2] *Globe*, 1st Sess., 35th Cong., pp. 14–18.

nant to them." He rejected the views of those opportunists who urged that Congress should await the result of the election on the 21st of December. The Lecompton constitution, he showed, made it impossible to have "a fair vote on the slavery clause" and therefore, he asked, "why wait for the mockery of an election, when it is provided unalterably, that the people cannot vote—when the majority are disfranchised?"

The outcome of the election, he protested, was of no particular importance from the present standpoint, because there was no more reason for forcing upon Kansas a free state constitution than a slave state constitution. Passing definitely to the side of the Northern Democrats, he asserted:—"It is none of my business which way the slavery clause is decided. I care not whether it is voted down or voted up." The operations in Kansas, whereby the Lecompton constitution had been brought to the front, he denounced as "a system of trickery and jugglery to defeat the fair expression of the will of the people." The only way to get an honest decision, he thought, was to recur to the Toombs bill, or some other similar in character, and to enact legislation which would render it possible to get a fair ballot.

Douglas's defection was bitterly resented by the pro-slavery men who had supposed that he was hopelessly bound to them by his presidential aspirations.[1] Instantly he was attacked by Bigler of

[1] The powerful impression made upon the mind of John Sherman by Douglas's leadership has been expressed in his

Pennsylvania and by Mason. He at once answered Mason, and then engaged in an interchange of shots with Bigler, based upon a suggestion of the latter that at certain secret meetings in Douglas's own house, Douglas had advocated the Lecompton constitution. Bigler asserted that the question of submitting the constitution to the people was discussed at his opponent's house, but he professed to be somewhat hazy in his recollection whether Douglas himself had taken a definite stand upon the question of direct submission. Others, however, recalled that in former speeches and documents he had advocated leaving the slavery question to the people through delegates chosen for that purpose. Douglas emerged from the debate with substantial success, notwithstanding the skill of some

Recollections. Vol. I, p. 149 ff.—"When Congress assembled, the Lecompton scheme became the supreme subject for debate. Mr. Douglas assumed at once the leadership of the opposition to that measure. He said: 'Up to the time of meeting of the convention, in October last, the pretense was kept up, the profession was openly made, and believed by me, and I thought believed by them, that the convention intended to submit a constitution to the people, and not to attempt to put a government into operation without such a submission.' But instead of that, 'All men must vote for the constitution, whether they like it or not, in order to be permitted to vote for or against slavery.' Again he said: 'I have asked a very large number of the gentlemen who framed the constitution, quite a number of delegates and still a larger number of persons who are their friends, and I have received the same answer from every one of them. . . . They say if they allowed a negative vote the constitution would have been voted down by an overwhelming majority, and hence the fellows shall not be allowed to vote at all.' He denounced it as 'a trick, a fraud upon the rights of the people.'"

of his antagonists. The applause from the galleries of the Senate chamber was tremendous, while anti-slavery men hardly knew what to make of the situation. They saw, of course, that Douglas would shortly have to enter upon a campaign for reëlection in Illinois, and they marked with satisfaction the growth of the anti-slavery feeling in that state. They knew that, if defeated for the Senate, he would be politically dead for the time being at least. For all these and other obvious reasons, they did not trust Douglas or in any measure believe in his new position ; they felt that with a shifting of political conditions he would shortly appear once more as the shrewd pettifogging advocate he had seemed during the early stages of the Kansas-Nebraska bill.

While Douglas was thus failing to get, among anti-slavery men, the recognition which some might have expected, but which he himself would probably have detested, he had also failed in a more vital respect. He did not obtain the favor of the Northern Democratic wing in Congress, or of moderate Democrats anywhere. Save for a few scattering supporters, he was now isolated, while the less courageous Northern Democratic senators, long jealous of Douglas's preëminent position, set themselves at the task of harassing and annoying him on the floor. The change of front had succeeded admirably at home, and had retrieved what seemed to have been an almost hopeless situation in Illinois. The conspicuous position which Douglas had as-

sumed flattered the vanity of the voters, while those who had feared that he was too close to the Southern slaveholders were now convinced that their suspicions had been wrong. "An immense mass-meeting was held in Chicago," says Sheahan, "and resolutions of the most unqualified approbation of the doctrines of the speech were enthusiastically adopted."[1] Douglas had once more shown himself a master in the political game, turning a threatened defeat into a brilliant personal victory, although by so doing demoralizing the forces which he had been leading in the Senate.

The contest in Congress now opened vigorously. In Kansas, the Lecompton constitution was of course adopted. The anti-slavery men regarded the election as a sham and remained absent. Hence the legislature provided for another election on January 4, 1858. This had been done by reason of the action of Stanton, then acting governor in the absence of Walker, in convening a special session of the legislature which was under the control of the anti-slavery party. Stanton was immediately removed by Buchanan, but the second election was held in the meanwhile, and resulted in the casting of a large vote against the constitution under any conditions, thus making it clear that there was a substantial majority against its adoption. Buchanan, however, in a message of February 2d,[2] sent the Lecompton constitution to the Senate, recommending the admission of Kansas under it.

[1] *Life*, p. 324.

[2] *Messages and Papers*, Vol. V, p. 471.

This message was referred to the Committee on Territories, which in the meanwhile had been reappointed with Douglas as chairman, and a bitter debate was opened on the floor. The President had also sent to Congress the constitution of the state of Minnesota which had been referred to the Committee on Territories and was now pending, along with the Kansas question. Douglas's attitude had led his colleagues, while refraining from deposing him as chairman, to make up the membership of the committee in a way that insured opposition. The membership included beside Douglas, Jones of Iowa, Sebastian of Arkansas, Fitzpatrick of Alabama, Green of Missouri, Collamer of Vermont, and Wade of Ohio. This practically insured three distinct groups in the Committee. The Southern or pro-slavery group comprised Sebastian, Fitzpatrick and Green, while the small Northern anti-slavery group included Collamer and Wade. Douglas was practically isolated, although he had the tentative support of Jones of Iowa, who, however, finally attached himself to the Southern section.

Under the leadership of Green, a majority of the Committee reported a bill to admit Kansas into the Union. This was on February 18th, and at the same time Douglas reported against the measure, while Collamer and Wade united in another committee report. Douglas's report developed little that was novel, but followed the same line as the speech which he had delivered on the floor at the time of his breach with the administration. The

Lecompton constitution had been adopted and submitted in a way that was out of harmony with the spirit of the Kansas-Nebraska act, and therefore it was proper for Congress to intervene, and to exercise its superior power with a view to guaranteeing a true expression of the will of the people. While the report was made purely upon Douglas's own individual authority, and while he had evidently little personal following in Congress, it was plainly evident that his position was of considerable importance, since it was influencing many along lines which they had previously refused to follow. To the whole country it was a great and shining example of personal courage, and in that light it caused special annoyance to the ringsters in Congress who regarded nothing as more odious than independent thought and action. Every effort was made to entrap Douglas into some inconsistent position, and this result was specially sought in connection with the constitution of Minnesota, where the issue of direct submission to the people was likewise raised. Douglas, however, took his stand upon the broad ground of a desire to have every state constitution represent merely the manifest wish of the majority of those who were to live under it, and no progress was achieved in suppressing his personality on the floor, although he did not take his usual conspicuous part in the debate. The effort was made, therefore, to attack him on purely political lines. The Democratic administration was then thoroughly and absolutely in control of all the

apparatus of government, and the usual form of discipline was now applied for the purpose of breaking up his personal "machine." Appointments that should have gone to him were made without reference to his wishes, while his own political adherents were dismissed and proscribed. The local offices in Illinois which by custom he had been allowed to fill, were taken from him, and the effort was made to cut away the ground that had been gained by his change of front in connection with the Kansas question.

None of these manœuvres, however, was successful and the discussion, punctuated by efforts to force a vote, dragged on until March 23d, when Crittenden presented a substitute measure. It provided in substance that Kansas should be admitted with the Lecompton constitution, but admission was made conditional upon the prior submission of the instrument to a direct vote of the people, and a majority vote in its favor. In case the constitution should be approved, the President was to declare Kansas a state. This plan was rejected, however, by a moderate majority, and then the original measure, reported by Green and his colleagues of the committee, simply providing for the admission of Kansas with the Lecompton constitution, was adopted.

This action was taken after Douglas, on the evening of the 22d of March, had delivered a long speech, having risen from a sick bed in order to be present. In it he reviewed his position and general

attitude on the Kansas question. The speech was frequently interrupted and was far more desultory than most of his efforts, closing with a weak form of apology for the personalities he had indulged in. As we have seen, it did not change the course of the Senate's action.[1] The Senate bill had been passed by a vote of thirty-three to twenty-five. It now went to the House and on the 1st of April the Crittenden amendment, which had failed in the Senate, was substituted by a vote of 120 to 122. After discussion, a conference committee representing both bodies reported a bill prepared by Mr. English of Indiana and known as the English bill. This was a compromise which made a large grant of government lands to Kansas, and provided that the people should vote upon the question of accepting the lands and entering the Union under the Lecompton constitution, while in case they rejected the lands and the constitution they should not be admitted as a state until there was a sufficient population to conform to the congressional requirements for a representative. This proposal was accepted in both houses although, after some hesitation, Douglas voted against it in the Senate. When the proposition was presented to the people of Kansas on August 2d, an overwhelming majority (11,300 out of 13,088 votes) was cast against the English bill. Slavery had thus been defeated, and the Kansas question, although partially settled, re-

[1] For text of this speech see *Globe*, 1st Sess., 35th Cong., *Appendix*, pp. 194–202.

mained; while the saving of Douglas's personal fortunes had again disorganized the Democratic party in Congress. It was a melancholy outcome of his movement for the presidential nomination, which had been the origin of the Kansas-Nebraska act.

Attention was now more and more closely concentrated upon Douglas's personal future. Not only had his own commanding position focussed public notice, but he was regarded by increasing numbers as embodying the prospects of the Democratic party. As early as July, 1858, Godkin had already written: "In the political world everybody's attention is absorbed by the canvass for the Illinois election in the autumn, when Senator Douglas will have to struggle against a host of foes. It was rumored at one time that the Lecomptonites were disposed to forgive him his bad conduct last winter, and in order to preserve the unity of the party receive him once more into the Democratic fold. These expectations are, however, now at an end, and it is ascertained, beyond all question, that he will have to encounter the unrelenting hostility of his old friends, as well as of the Republicans. With the latter his services to the Free Soil cause during the last session of Congress have not sufficed to wipe out the recollection of the Missouri Compromise, and a hundred other stabs administered to freedom by the same nervous arm. Douglas made his entry into Chicago on Saturday, and delivered a long address, reviewing his recent course. He

was received with mixed demonstrations of applause and disapprobation. In spite of his treason, his chances of victory are probably greater than those of any other man in the Union would be under the same circumstances. This division in the ranks of the Democrats gives the Republicans a better chance of victory in Illinois than ever they have had before; and a Republican victory in Illinois, the headquarters of Douglas, would create the most tremendous 'sensation' of latter days, and would very materially influence the next presidential election." [1]

No one was more keenly alive to the responsibilities resting upon him than Douglas himself. He now had at issue not only the presidency, his hopes for which had already received some very serious blows, but also his seat in the Senate, since it was necessary that he should seek reëlection at the hands of a constituency profoundly dissatisfied with the position he had taken during the Kansas-Nebraska struggle and, it seemed, only partially reassured by the change of front which he himself had shrewdly made in connection with the Lecompton question. Should he be defeated for the Senate, Douglas could not hope for any future whatever in national politics. The verdict against a man who could not carry his own state would be unhesitatingly unfavorable. Moreover, it would be a note of warning that would be heard all over the country and would call every doubting voter to

[1] *Life of E. L. Godkin*, Vol. I, pp. 177–178.

arms against the Democratic party. On all accounts, then, it was incumbent upon Douglas to do his utmost. At all hazards, he must win the battle in Illinois, and he must win it in a way that would give him what might pass for a triumphant vindication. Nothing less than this would suffice.

There were, however, some hopeful indications. Not a few men of Republican sympathies were inclined to think that the best thing possible would be to unite on Douglas and positively draw to his support the Northern Democrats, the more liberal Southerners, and the doubters who felt that something must be done to check the excesses of the extreme slavery men as well as the extreme Abolitionists. Even Horace Greeley thought that because of Douglas's meritorious service against the Lecompton constitution and the resulting effect of that struggle in making Kansas a free state, the Republicans of Illinois ought to testify their approbation by giving Douglas a unanimous nomination for the senatorship.[1] Many other influential Republicans had the same thought, but such was not the feeling within the state. In Illinois itself, local issues had played an important part in Douglas's career and his action upon purely national questions was considered of decidedly minor importance. Those who were close to him at home could alone judge of his tremendous resource, and they more than others realized that his change of front on the Lecompton question had been, in part at least, ani-

[1] Carr, *Life of Douglas*, p. 72.

mated by the necessity of controlling the current of events in Illinois. They were not inclined to accept the more or less sentimental suggestions of Greeley and others, and besides, unlike outsiders, they realized that they had among them one who was in many respects Douglas's equal as a politician, while possessing a vastly deeper fund of moral power and high determination. Abraham Lincoln had only recently returned to active political life, yet he had often crossed swords with Douglas—as attorney, as stump speaker, and in other ways. He had felt Douglas's powerful influence throughout the state militating against everything in which he himself believed, and Douglas, too, had been conscious that in the ungainly form of Lincoln there lay possibilities of statesmanship and political skill that might well give him reason for alarm, should he ever be forced to meet such an antagonist in open battle.

It was soon evident that Douglas had behind him the united Democratic strength of the state. Early in April the state convention endorsed him heartily,[1] notwithstanding heavy pressure from

[1] Flint, *Douglas*, pp. 94-95, sketches the views of the Douglas men as follows: "Notwithstanding the ferocity with which the warfare was continued against Mr. Douglas and his friends during the Lecompton controversy, all fair-minded men took it for granted that hostilities would cease with the settlement of the question out of which the contest arose. Mr. Douglas and the Illinois Democracy seem to have entertained this reasonable expectation, as appears from the proceedings of the Illinois Democratic State Convention, which assembled at Springfield, on the 21st of April, 1858, for the nomination of candidates for

Buchanan and a political massacre of his personal followers, who were ruthlessly sacrificed to build up a "machine" that could successfully create a diversion against the hated antagonist of the administration. Douglas, however, was so strong that it was plain to all he would repeat his customary successes unless a man of unusual fibre should be put into the field against him. About the middle of June, a Republican convention nominated Lincoln in opposition to Douglas, basing hope of success upon the fact that Buchanan's efforts would probably divide the Democratic party into at least two sections. Buchanan in fact had sent Francis J. Grund to Chicago to begin vigorous war against Douglas. He undertook active work, not only displacing the occupants of the better Federal offices, but also endeavoring to mobilize the postmasters of the state for operations against Douglas. In the latter attempt, he was only partially successful, and before long the effort of the

state offices. While the resolutions were explicit and firm in the assertion of the principles on which they had rejected the Lecompton constitution, they were conciliating in spirit and respectful in language. They contain no assault on the President, no attack upon the administration, and indulge in no complaint at the unprovoked and vindictive warfare which had been waged against them. They maintain a dignified and manly silence, a generous forbearance on all these points, with a view to the preservation of the organization, the usages, and the integrity of the Democratic party upon its time-honored principles, as enunciated in the Cincinnati platform. The resolutions adopted by the convention were introduced into the Senate by Mr. Douglas on the 25th of April,' as furnishing the platform on which the Illinois Democracy stand, and by which I mean to abide.' "

administration was largely centralized upon securing the nomination of anti-Douglas state officials rather than in direct opposition to the candidate himself. It began to look as if the effort of Buchanan would be ultimately to defeat as many as possible of the Democratic nominees for the legislature, and possibly for Congress as well.[1]

Douglas, bringing with him his family, hastened to Chicago as soon as his senatorial duties would permit. He reached the city on the 9th of July and was met by a procession which escorted him, with salvos of artillery, cheers and boundless enthusiasm, to his hotel. Lincoln, meanwhile, had already begun his campaign, declaring the dangers of slavery and charging Douglas in veiled terms with double-dealing or at least with not knowing his own mind. The cause of progress, said Lincoln, must be entrusted only to those who were unquestionably its friends. Douglas readily took up the gauntlet, accepting Lincoln's innuendoes and attacks as directed immediately at himself. Lincoln in accepting the Republican nomination had delivered a written speech—good evidence that the offer was no surprise to him. In this, he had emphatically put forward the view that slavery and the question of its continuance must be the real issue in the campaign. That point was met by Douglas in his answer to the welcome which awaited him at Chicago. He denied that slavery must be wiped out and that Abolitionism must be

[1] Sheahan, *Life*, p. 396 ff.

forced upon the inhabitants of those states which from the beginning had maintained the peculiar institution, any more than that slavery must be forced upon those states which disliked it or whose economic institutions made it an unsuitable and inapplicable method of industry. The speech was on the whole decidedly effective and was well received, though it was evident that there was a very sharp division of opinion. Much buncombe had been added by Douglas in an effort to catch the crowd, but the principal issues were clearly set forth and could not be mistaken. Lincoln could not fail to note the effect on public sentiment produced by his opponent's speech and answered it on the following night in an address of less self-possession and assurance than that with which he had opened the contest. Douglas undoubtedly felt that he had gained the advantage of Lincoln in the first round of the battle, and he hastened to follow up the victory. He went to Springfield on the 16th of July, attended by constant demonstrations of popularity and good-will, stopping at Joliet where he spoke again, and at Bloomington, where Lincoln, determined that his rival should not anticipate him, boarded the same train. Sheahan remarks, with satisfaction and some malice, that "Lincoln was perhaps the only Lincoln man on the train." But there were many who differed from this view. Douglas's effort at Springfield was immediately answered by Lincoln himself in a speech which was received in a way that indicated

vigorous and wide-spread support of the latter's doctrines.

Douglas was now thoroughly alive to the danger by which he was confronted. He sat with the State Democratic Committee and mapped out a long list of meetings, extending until the end of October; to these he subsequently added about twenty others. It is worthy of note that the people gathered at the places on his regular list of appointments almost invariably listened to speeches of about two and a half hours in length. Lincoln had not neglected a move in his opponent's game. The list of appointments had been published almost immediately in Democratic newspapers all over the state. He saw that Douglas, with his tremendous energy, his close alliance with the railroads, and his splendid organization, would be able to reach the voters in a way and to an extent that he himself could hardly hope to rival, unless some positive step were taken. He had full confidence that, if given the opportunity, he could offset the effect of Douglas's argument since no man ever believed more firmly than did he himself in the righteousness of his cause. To match his antagonist and to obtain in some measure an equal opportunity of reaching the same constituency, he resolved to propose to Douglas a series of joint debates.

Douglas had left Springfield, after working out the plans for the campaign, and had returned to Chicago on the 24th of July. On that same day,

Lincoln addressed him in a very brief note in which he asked whether his opponent would "divide time and address the same audiences." In answer, Douglas responded that his appointments were now made and that he could not accept the proposal, though he was willing to arrange for a discussion at one point in each congressional district except the second and sixth districts, where both had already spoken. He suggested that the debates take place at Freeport, Ottawa, Galesburg, Quincy, Alton, Jonesboro and Charleston. In a letter of July 29th,[1] Lincoln showed some heat, answering rather sharply the cutting remarks of Douglas's letter of the 24th, but he accepted the arrangement to speak at the seven places designated. Under date of the 30th of July Douglas confirmed his original proposal and fixed the dates and places as follows: Ottawa, August 21st; Freeport, August 27th; Jonesboro, September 15th; Charleston, September 18th; Galesburg, October 7th; Quincy, October 13th; Alton, October 15th. He further suggested that he himself should open with an hour's speech at Ottawa, Lincoln to follow with an hour and a half and he to close with half an hour, the order to be alternately reversed at the succeeding meetings. In a brief note of July 31st Lincoln referred somewhat pettishly to the fact that this gave his opponent four

[1] This correspondence is given in full in *Political Debates between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas*, Columbus; Follett, Foster & Co., 1860, pp. 64–66.

opening and four closing speeches to his own three, but he nevertheless accepted the conditions of the debate. Thus the issue was joined and an historic forensic struggle was at hand.

CHAPTER XIII

THE JOINT DEBATES

THE first debate of the series had been set for the 21st of August at Ottawa, in LaSalle County. Douglas arrived on the scene with a considerable flourish, in a special train, one car of which carried a gun for the purpose of firing salutes *en route*. Lincoln made the journey in his accustomed modest style. There was the same difference between the appearance of the contestants on the platform. The speeches were out-of-doors in the public square of the town with "an immense concourse of people from all parts of the state" in attendance.[1] Others had come from a greater distance for the purpose of witnessing what they expected to be one of the critical struggles of the campaign. Henry Villard, then a newspaper correspondent and later to be the promoter and builder of one of the country's great railways; Carl Schurz, the young German idealist who was within a few years to play so conspicuous a part in moulding public opinion, and others, either then or subsequently influential in shaping national destinies, were listeners.

Another eye-witness, deeply attached to Douglas, has vividly described the scene: "It was a curious sight to look upon when the vast crowd

[1] Villard, *Memoirs*, 1904, Vol. I, p. 92.

of earnest men and women of both parties were wedged in together before the grand stand. There was the usual jostling and crowding to get good places. There was taunting and jeering between the representatives of each party, but very few breaches of the peace. When the speaking began there was almost perfect order. If the pent-up feelings of either party caused an angry demonstration, its representative on the platform would rise and beg his friends to desist. When they applauded a speaker, he would beg them to cease as it would be taken out of his time. The time-keepers, made up from both political parties, seated upon the platform, were inexorable. The speakers alternated at the different places in opening and closing. At the precise moment in which the time for opening arrived, the first speaker must begin. A speaker was given an hour for his opening; then his competitor had an hour and a half; and he who opened was given half an hour to close. Time was called at the moment a speaker should conclude, and he could only finish the sentence he was upon and could not begin another." [1]

Upon discerning men the effect of the speakers in this crucial contest was far from being that which some over-enthusiastic chroniclers have described. The aureole later to become firmly fixed about the head of Lincoln, had not yet begun to form, and to the eyes of those who were not too deeply tinged with anti-slavery feeling the future President offered

[1] Carr, *Douglas*, p. 84.

anything but a dignified figure. Schurz, who accompanied him to the place of meeting, had already found it hard to think of Lincoln as a great man, while Villard in contrasting the two noted "nothing in favor of Lincoln," who "used singularly awkward, almost absurd, up and down and sidewise movements of his body to give emphasis to his arguments." Schurz was annoyed by Lincoln's habit of shooting up into the air upon tiptoe to emphasize a point, and was equally displeased with Douglas, notwithstanding the latter's more dapper costume, since he found that the "Little Giant" "smacked of the bar-room." The audience, however, was not greatly troubled by the personal peculiarities of the two speakers, nor were they over-nice in their weighing of constitutional and ethical questions. Perhaps little blame can be attached to either of the debaters for recognizing the peculiarities of the rank and file of the audience, and for occasionally drifting off from the slavery question and other public issues to indulge in personal abuse, somewhat coarse stories and charges of falsehood, misrepresentation and early low associations. There are probably few who at the present day are either willing to read through the text of the debates or can endure with patience the style of argument which forms their basis.

Douglas led off with an hour's speech.[1] His

[1] The matter for discussion of Douglas's debates with Lincoln must be drawn primarily from the text of the speeches themselves. That which has been used in the preparation of this

main point was an effort "to put the question to Abraham Lincoln . . . whether he now stands and will stand by each article in the [Republican] creed and carry it out."[1] He asked pointedly whether Lincoln was willing to stand "as he did in 1854, in favor of the unconditional repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law"; whether he stood pledged to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, or to the prohibition of the slave trade between the different states, or to the prohibition of slavery in all the territories, and whether he was opposed to the acquisition of more territory unless slavery should be prohibited therein. From these questions, Douglas passed rapidly to personal abuse of Lincoln couched in the form of ironical compliment.[2] Later he charged Lincoln with "following the example of all the little Abolition orators who go around and lecture in the basements of schools and churches," in asserting that all men are created equal. Douglas did not regard the negro as his equal and positively denied that "he is my brother or any kin to me whatever."[3]

In answer Lincoln made little or no effort to meet the questions of his opponent. It is probable he

chapter is the text published by Follett, Foster & Co., Columbus, 1860, which includes not only the debates but also some of the more important speeches by both men immediately preceding and immediately following. The most vivid recollections of eye-witnesses to the struggle between the two men are those of Schurz (*Reminiscences*), Villard (*Memoirs*), and a few others. Contemporary newspaper matter is of comparatively little service during the period of the debates.

[1] *Debates*, p. 68. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 69. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

had not expected so keen and direct an onslaught. The speech of rebuttal in fact was almost painfully wandering and tedious, beginning with some display of irritation at the personal charges of Douglas, and with a suggestion of inability on his opponent's part to tell the truth. From this, Lincoln passed to a lengthy review of his own position on the Fugitive Slave Law, explaining incidentally his relationship to certain resolutions on that subject said to have been adopted at the Republican convention in Springfield which Douglas had read. He flatly denied that he had even been in Springfield at the time when the alleged resolutions were accepted. Few points of principle were developed in the discussion. In answer to Douglas's charge about the supposed claim of negro equality, Lincoln answered with force that while he made no pretense of supporting any claim to such equality, he believed that the negro "in the right to eat the bread [he had earned] without the leave of anybody else . . . is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas and the equal of every living man." A long and rather tiresome discussion of the Nebraska bill with some references to the Dred Scott decision, interrupted by an impatient Irish auditor, who bawled out, "Give us something besides Drid Scott," closed what was undoubtedly an unsatisfactory rejoinder.

Douglas's sur-rebuttal of half an hour's length did not add much to the matter in hand. He dealt chiefly with the alleged facts about the Springfield

resolutions and charged Lincoln with an effort to dodge the question.[1] Strongly confident in the good impression which he believed he had produced upon his hearers, Douglas did not hesitate to reiterate with force the position he had taken in his opening speech. As usual, however, on such occasions, neither orator convinced any one who had already made up his mind. Hoots and shouts of derision or approval had punctuated the speeches as the partisans of one or the other of the two men saw or believed that his own favorite was gaining the advantage in the argument. The debate had barely closed when two ardent admirers of Lincoln, rushing to the platform, seized their idol and elevated him to their shoulders, affording to the humorously minded a "ludicrous sight" as the "grotesque figure" of the future statesman was carried from the scene, the hands frantically grasping the heads of his supporters, his legs dangling from their shoulders, while in the scuffle his trousers had been so far pulled up as to expose his underclothing almost to the knees.[2] Douglas was not subjected to so undignified a form of approval, a fact upon which he laid some stress in the next debate, ridiculing his opponent and getting from him the familiar charge of falsehood by way of rejoinder.

At the second debate in Freeport in Stephenson County, on August 27th, the discussion was really opened. Lincoln sought to meet categorically the

[1] *Debates*, p. 84. [2] Villard, *Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 93.

issues that had been raised by Douglas at the opening of his first speech on the platform at Ottawa. As already noted, Douglas had there asked whether Lincoln was "pledged" to opposition to the admission of more slave states, following this with other questions. Lincoln now took up the questions put by Douglas *seriatim*, answering each with the statement that he was not "pledged" to anything of the sort. The weakness of this kind of special pleading, however, was perceived, even by its author, and he presently noted that while he was not technically pledged on any of the points in question, he entertained more or less definite ideas about them. He believed that the people of the Southern states were entitled to a fugitive slave law, although he thought the existing law should be remodeled "without lessening its efficiency."[1] As to whether he would favor the admission of more slave states, he said that he "would be exceedingly sorry ever to be put in a position of having to pass upon that question." The abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia was, he said, within the power of Congress, yet if in Congress he would not himself endeavor to abolish the institution except gradually and with compensation to owners. Turning the tables upon Douglas, he put some questions of his own, inquiring whether his opponent would favor the admission of Kansas into the Union with less than 93,000 inhabitants, whether the people of any United States territory could exclude slavery

[1] *Debates*, p. 89.

prior to the formation of a state constitution, whether his opponent would accept a Supreme Court decision to the effect that states cannot exclude slavery from their limits, and whether he would favor the acquiring of additional territory without regard to the question how such acquisition might affect the nation on the slavery question.[1] Reverting to the personal phases of the controversy, he took up the question of the alleged Springfield resolutions and charged Douglas with a gross blunder in mistaking the resolutions of a minor convention in Kane County for resolutions passed by the Republican convention at Springfield. He called attention to the fact that there was, in the fall of 1854, no convention, holding a session in Springfield, which called itself a Republican State Convention. The earlier suggestion of a conspiracy with reference to the Nebraska bill, intended to make slavery perpetual and national, was reiterated, and the speech was closed by an *ad captandum* appeal to the prejudice of the voters of the northern counties of Illinois who constituted the rank and file of his audience. Lincoln's questions had been intended to put Douglas into a difficult position by compelling him, if possible, to say that in the event of a Supreme Court decision, such as had been outlined, he would advocate the acceptance of the verdict. Should this reply be made, the effect would naturally be to produce a breach between the ambitious man who was now eagerly look-

[1] *Debates*, p. 90.

ing to the presidential nomination and some influential group among his supporters. In the event of a reply adverse to the final authority of the court, much of Douglas's general argument with reference to the location of sovereignty would be set at naught, and in either case a distinct point would be scored.

There was, however, no such equivocation in his opponent's rejoinder as had characterized Lincoln's method of meeting the first set of questions. As to Kansas, Douglas answered at once that since Kansas had people enough for a slave state, it had in his opinion enough for a free state.[1] As to whether the people of a territory could exclude slavery from their limits, Douglas stated plainly that in his opinion there were lawful means whereby that end could be attained. As to the Supreme Court of the United States and its verdict, Douglas answered with indignation that Mr. Lincoln's object was "to cast an imputation upon the Supreme Court." Unquestionably the court would never reach a decision so violative of the Constitution as to hold that the states could not exclude slavery. This he said "would be an act of moral treason that no man on the bench could ever descend to."[2] And finally, said Douglas, regarding the increase in territory, he was in favor of an enlargement of the nation's boundaries without any reference to the question of slavery, leaving the inhabitants to make it slave or free territory as they chose.[3]

[1] *Debates*, p. 94. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 96. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 96.

It was the position taken by Douglas with reference to the Supreme Court and its relation to the slavery question that gave to the debate at Freeport more significance than was assigned by the country at large to any of the other meetings. So broad and deep an interest did his utterances on this question of jurisdiction arouse, that the reasoning then put forward by him shortly came to be known as the "Freeport doctrine"—a name which it has since retained. Lincoln had embarrassed Douglas most seriously by asking whether the people of a United States territory could, in any lawful way, exclude slavery from their limits prior to the formation of a state constitution—a question whose bearings upon the Dred Scott case made it hard for him to answer without in some measure compromising or contradicting himself. The best he could do was to carry his doctrine of local rights to its extreme, notwithstanding that this action necessitated his minimizing the powers of the Supreme Court itself. The hypothetical position of the court in future cases was of no moment even in the abstract, he urged, since "the people have the lawful means to introduce it or exclude it [slavery], as they please, for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere unless it is supported by local police regulations. Those police regulations can only be established by the local legislature, and if the people are opposed to slavery they will elect representatives to that body who will by unfriendly legislation effectually prevent the introduction of it into

their midst. If, on the other hand, they are for it, their legislature will favor its extension. Hence no matter what the decision of the Supreme Court may be on that abstract question, still the right of the people to make a slave territory or a free territory is perfect and complete under the Nebraska bill."

Having thus met the direct inquiries of Lincoln, Douglas attempted to explain the errors into which he had been betrayed with reference to the alleged Springfield resolutions of 1854. He stated that he had obtained the information from Charles H. Lanphier, editor of the *State Register* at Springfield, and that he had supposed the resolutions were as represented. Whether they were or not, they were at all events the principles of the "black Republican party"—an assertion in which he was supported by one of the men who had originally drawn the resolutions and who happened to be present. From this, Douglas passed to a diatribe against the position of the extreme advocates of Abolition, and closed with a charge that Lincoln in his argument had suggested corruption on the part of the Supreme Court and of two Presidents of the United States.

Opening with a few words of personal vindication, Lincoln in rebuttal addressed himself chiefly to personalities and minor charges, thereby seriously weakening the strong impression which he had produced in his earlier argument. The main point in Douglas's discussion was shirked, and the audience was left with the decided feeling that Douglas had scored as great a success in the second round of the

battle as in the first. The apparent unwillingness of Lincoln to express himself with vigor on the slavery question, his abandonment of his own natural weapon—the simple and forceful enunciation of broad principles,—and his acceptance of the hair-splitting, logic-chopping methods of his opponent, in which the latter was far his superior, annoyed and disturbed the advocates who had expected that, long before the end of the second meeting, the position of Douglas would have been turned and his weak pro-slavery flank and rear subjected to a keen fire of criticism.

The third debate of the series had been set for September 15th at Jonesboro, Union County, in the southern portion of the state. It was now Douglas's turn to open. He and his opponent had been gradually working southward, during the weeks which had intervened since the meeting at Freeport, and both were worn and weary with almost continual rough travel and political warfare. As the northern part of the state had been that of which Lincoln had been surest, and the central that in which the issue was most doubtful, so Douglas was generally considered to be substantially assured of the support of the southern counties. The inhabitants of southern Illinois, never particularly intelligent, were included in a district locally known as "Egypt," apparently from the mental darkness supposed to prevail there. Although the audience was biased and practically predetermined in its hostility toward Republican ideas, the meeting at

Jonesboro was the least satisfactory of the series up to that time, both in point of attendance and in the lack of interest displayed. In opening, Douglas gave a brief review of the political alignment of the country prior to 1854, which he said had been based upon the Whig and Democratic parties. Restless, ambitious and disappointed politicians had in 1854 taken advantage of the temporary excitement caused by the Nebraska bill to create an Abolition party, founding their hopes upon the belief that they could control the country by appealing to Northern prejudice.[1] Coupled with this partisan interpretation of politics, Douglas presented a charge that Lincoln had participated in a scheme to divert members of the Whig party to the new group, pretending that he himself was as good a Whig as ever. Taking up the issues of the current campaign, he said that Lincoln had made war upon the Supreme Court and its decision in the Dred Scott case. He himself was content to accept the Supreme Court's view. He was in favor of preserving the government "as our fathers made it."[2] The question of the negro's rights and privileges was a question which must be determined by every state in the Union for itself. He was utterly opposed to negro suffrage anywhere and under any circumstances, yet, since the Supreme Court had decided in the Dred Scott case that a state had a right to confer the privilege of voting upon free negroes, he had nothing to say in criticism. Only by maintain-

[1] *Debates*, p. 111. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

ing in each state the right of each state to do as it pleased without meddling with its neighbors, could the Union continue upon its old basis.

When Lincoln rose to reply, he was obliged to admit that Douglas had presented a substantially strong case. More tactful than in his former openings, he conceded that he "cordially approved" of very many of the principles of his opponent. He agreed "entirely" with Douglas's doctrine "that all the states have a right to do exactly as they please about all their domestic relations including that of slavery," and added that he had no disposition to interfere with them. Inconsistently, however, he continued that it was impossible that the Union could permanently endure half slave and half free. Referring in an uncomplimentary way to Brooks, the assailant of Sumner, and to the latter's statement that no one had expected the institution of slavery to last as long as it had, he insisted that the time had come when an effort should be made to get back to the early conditions regarding slavery which had been contemplated by the founders of the Constitution. Without, however, explaining how this was to be done, Lincoln drifted into a long reply to the partisan and unfair political diatribe which had consumed so much of Douglas's hour and a half, and from this he drew the conclusion that all the trouble and confusion of the time had not arisen from the effort to maintain the rights of the states to do with slavery as they pleased, but had flowed from the effort to spread slavery gen-

erally throughout the Union. Recurring then to the substance of the Freeport discussion, Lincoln quoted numerous resolutions, questions and answers that had come up in the local politics of Illinois during the years since 1850, and nearly equaled Douglas in his appeal to prejudice. He twitted his opponent with failure to discuss further the interrogatories which had been offered at the Ottawa meeting and which he himself had answered at Freeport. Closing his wandering and unwise remarks, he referred to the incident at Ottawa in which the two young farmers had carried him sprawling from the platform and at length charged his opponent with misrepresentation.

Douglas's sur-rebuttal developed little that was new or valuable but was undoubtedly in better temper than his opening address. The burden of his argument lay in the assertion that Lincoln was still unwilling to meet the question of Abolitionism, and with great force he called attention to the fact that an agreement existed among certain members of the Republican party in favor of the exclusion of slavery from the territories.

At Charleston on September 18th, only three days after the meeting at Jonesboro, the debaters met for a fourth time. Charleston was situated in a district whose vote was unsettled and where the interest was much more intense than that which had been exhibited in the more southerly region. Attendance was much better, partly due to the existence of a state fair at Centralia not far away,

and the intelligence with which the discussion was followed was substantially higher. The privilege of opening had now, in the process of alternation, fallen to Lincoln. He had been impressed with the belief that the doctrine of "social equality" had been too definitely fastened upon the party he represented, and that he had indulged in too much personality toward his opponent with probably too little specific political accusation. He began, therefore, by declaring his attitude upon the social position of the negro. A "physical difference" existed between the white and black races which, Lincoln believed, would "forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality."[1] This necessarily meant, said he, that the "superior position" must fall to the white race,—a view which left some of the speaker's previous assertions and doctrines much clouded by doubt. From this positive statement of his convictions upon the delicate issue of the negro's relation to the white man, Lincoln passed to a series of definite political charges against Douglas. Primarily he discussed a controversy which had been carried on between Douglas and Trumbull, the other senator from Illinois. He reviewed the history of the Toombs bill, and charged that in its original form the measure had directed that the constitution to be drafted by the Kansas convention should be submitted to a vote of the people. Douglas had, said Lincoln, been instrumental in cutting out the provi-

[1] *Debates*, p. 136.

sion for a vote. In answering Trumbull on the point, he also charged that Douglas had failed to meet this accusation though it could be supported by a "pretty fair show of proof" that the senator from Illinois had entered into "a plot to put in force a constitution for Kansas without giving the people any opportunity of voting on it." [1] This charge Lincoln elaborated at great length, and when Douglas rose for reply he displayed manifest irritation.

Congratulating his rival upon having defined his position as to negro citizenship and eligibility to office, he plunged into the question of the Toombs bill and his relation to it. He read from the report he himself had made at the time when he reported the Toombs substitute to the Senate, asserting that he "took it for granted that the [Kansas] constitution was to be submitted to the people, whether the bill was silent on the subject or not." [2] There was, he said, "a conspiracy to carry this election for the black Republicans by slander and not by fair means." Lincoln had misrepresented the situation, and Trumbull had deliberately lied about the matter. In bitter personal invective, he attacked Lincoln and Trumbull jointly, though asserting that he had no charges to make against them. Then, plunging into the usual political discussion, he devoted himself for a time to local affairs in their relation to existing national issues, presenting both Lincoln and Trumbull as disreputable figures but

[1] *Debates*, p. 138. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

closing with the usual vague appeal to his hearers in behalf of a government founded upon the principles laid down by the fathers of the Constitution.

Lincoln's sur-rebuttal met the charge that he had been evasive in regard to the position of the negro by the statement that he had never been questioned on that point. He even went further and declared that he was "not in favor of negro citizenship."[1] He showed bad temper because of the insinuation made by Douglas that there was a difference between his utterances in the northern, and what he had said in the southern, counties. The effort to pin the whole controversy to Kansas he objected to, saying that if Kansas were to sink beneath the earth, the real question would still remain. He insinuated that Douglas desired to "plant slavery over all the states," and leading forward one Orlando B. Ficklin, who was seated on the platform, said that Mr. Ficklin knew that a charge made by Douglas about the Mexican War and Lincoln's conduct therein was "a lie."[2]

The bad feeling which had been developed in the third and fourth debates was prominent in the fifth discussion, held this time at Galesburg, Knox County, on October 7th, although the language of the speakers was somewhat more in harmony with the usages of decent society. Douglas, opening the discussion as was now his privilege, described retrospectively the Kansas-Nebraska bill and the so-called English bill relating to the admis-

[1] *Debates*, p. 156. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 158.

sion of Kansas as a state. He sketched the origin of the Republican party, and pointedly asked whether the country had any interest in maintaining a sectional organization of this type. The harm of sectionalism was feelingly referred to, and the charge already made, that Lincoln varied his opinions to suit his audience, was reiterated in detail. Lincoln countered with an elaborate rejoinder to the allegation of sectionalism and then reviewed the Compromise of 1850. He referred again to the error made by Douglas in quoting the alleged Springfield resolutions, and charged his critic with acting in the same way as did the fisherman's wife whose drowned husband was brought home with his body full of eels. When asked what was to be done with him she said, "Take the eels out and set him again,"—a characteristic Lincolnian anecdote which the speaker applied to the repetition of the "stale fraud" of the Springfield resolutions. A new point was raised by Lincoln in connection with the further acquisition of territory and its probable relation to the slavery question. Douglas in his closing answer paid no attention to this matter, but devoted himself largely to the Springfield resolutions and his own attitude toward slavery.

There was not much advance in the process of developing the real merits of the controversy during the sixth joint debate, which took place at Quincy on the 13th of October. Lincoln opened with another discussion of the position of the negro, referred again to the Dred Scott decision and closed

with a more positive and explicit statement of the wrong involved in slavery than he had yet offered.

Douglas answered with more remarks about the Springfield resolutions, passed to the question of slavery in the territories, reiterated his charge about Lincoln's inconsistency, admitted that he was unwilling to discuss the question whether slavery was right or wrong in the abstract, because slavery already existed and must be dealt with by the several states as they saw fit, again referred to the Dred Scott decision and the Kansas-Nebraska bill, and closed by making his customary appeal for the maintenance of the Union upon traditional lines.

Lincoln's final answer called attention to an alleged admission of Douglas that his system of policy with regard to slavery contemplated the permanent establishment of that institution and again brought forward the question of inconsistency. There had been little novelty in the discussion, and no advance in the development of the merits of the issues at stake.

The last debate of the series was now to occur at Alton on the 15th of October. Douglas opened this last, as he had the first, debate, thus gaining the advantage for which he had shrewdly arranged in the original correspondence. It was logical that both men, although speaking to new audiences, should endeavor in this concluding passage at arms to summarize what they had already said in their preceding meetings. This to the reader causes the

text of the speeches to seem little more than bare repetition, but to the audience made the discussion perhaps more interesting than any of those that had gone before. Douglas's main point was again seen in his effort to show that Lincoln, despite his disclaimers, had accepted the idea of negro equality and was disposed to introduce into the constitutional system of the United States innovations which would result in weakening the powers of the several commonwealths. He first sketched the history of his opponent's position and his own reply, then charged that Lincoln, subsequent to the Ottawa meeting, had begun "to crawfish a little and let himself down," and had finally passed to a position radically opposed to that which he had first adopted. Taking his stand upon the belief that his opposition to the Lecompton constitution was not due to the slavery clause, but was due to the fact that it was not the willing opinion of the people of Kansas, he maintained that "there is no power on earth under our system of government, which has the right to force a constitution upon an unwilling people." [1] This issue he placed above the question of slavery and all other issues. In closing, Douglas laid special stress upon the immediate need of a united Democracy and of the necessity for white supremacy. Perhaps this presentation was the most effective that he had yet offered although here as elsewhere he was galled by the factional strife within his own party,

[1] *Debates*, p. 218.

and fell at times into more or less acrimonious attack upon his antagonist.

Lincoln, in answering, clearly showed his appreciation of the merits of Douglas's opening. He rebutted the interpretation of the position he had himself assumed on the question of negro equality, charging Douglas with building up a "beautiful fabrication" by a process of "garbling." This restatement of his own position Lincoln then followed with a review of the arguments he had previously developed. Growing stronger as he proceeded, and as he abandoned the personal recrimination which had so greatly marred his earlier efforts, Lincoln brought forward his really effective point in connection with the slavery question. He showed, with more force perhaps than ever before, that the great issue in the controversy lay in the question whether slavery was a wrong, and if so whether it should be treated as a wrong by handling it in such a way that it should grow no larger. Nothing, said Lincoln, had ever threatened the existence of the Union save slavery. If that were true, he asked with crushing force, how could the posture of affairs be improved by enlarging slavery? Yet Democrats regarded slavery as not wrong.[1] They insisted upon avoiding it in discussion, although the issue could not be avoided in fact. Douglas, after all, by the very nature of his argument upon constitutional questions, was the greatest Abolitionist in the country, since any

[1] *Debates*, p. 233.

argument that would justify unfriendly legislation to deprive a slaveholder of his right to hold his slaves in a territory would furnish an equally strong argument for nullifying the Fugitive Slave Law.

The last word in the discussion now fell to Douglas, yet of this opportunity he made but poor use. Seeking to establish the fact that Lincoln had fallen into inconsistencies, he charged that his opponent was also historically wrong in asserting that slavery had been the only cause of serious internal strife. Nullification, said Douglas, had been as great an issue. Disunion had appeared during the last war with Great Britain. Sectionalism was as great a danger. The interference of one section with the rights of individual states was farther reaching in its implications than the effect of any position taken on a concrete question such as that of slavery. But acceptance of the fundamental constitutional ideas would bring about peace between North and South, and incidental issues would settle themselves upon broad lines of principle.

That Douglas had had decidedly the better of Lincoln in the joint debates was pretty generally admitted by the time the contest was over. This was variously explained. Douglas and his followers had undoubtedly struggled with the ferocity of men who recognized the absolute necessity of winning, while to Lincoln, as has already been noted, the contest was merely the first battle in a

great campaign which was, if necessary, to last indefinitely. Douglas's organization, too, was vastly superior to that of his antagonist which had as yet not had time to perfect itself. Douglas, however, was not content with the apparent growth of his movement and the seemingly satisfactory success which he had enjoyed in the debates. No sooner was the last round with Lincoln over, than he resumed his own independent canvass, continuing this up to the last moment and averaging considerably more than one speech a day for a period of one hundred successive days. The usual number of falsehoods were circulated to his disadvantage, as might have been expected in an election where so much was at stake, and every effort was made to get the full list of voters out on election day. When the ballots had been counted, it appeared that the Democrats would be able to cast about forty votes in the lower house of the legislature against the Republicans' thirty-five, while in the upper chamber with fifteen contested districts they got eight votes and the Republicans the other seven. The final ballot in the legislature gave Douglas only eight more votes than Lincoln, the ballot standing fifty-four to forty-six. Had the issue been based upon popular majorities, Lincoln would easily have carried the state, as the candidates who were pledged to him totaled about 17,000 votes more than did Douglas's members, the latter receiving in all about 174,000 votes. The candidates who had been put forward at the in-

stance of Buchanan to vex Douglas secured hardly any support. In substance, the election meant that Douglas had succeeded in uniting the Democrats solidly behind him, and that with the state arranged as it was he was tolerably safe. The fact that Douglas had a popular majority against him was made much of at the time but was little to the purpose. Many votes would unquestionably have been differently cast had the issue been reduced to that of getting a mere majority. Some districts were from the outset hopelessly in Lincoln's favor just as others were solidly pro-Douglas. The state had been gerrymandered a long time before as the result of political necessity, or what was then considered to be such. This fact fixed the conditions under which the Lincoln-Douglas struggle must be made and drove the candidates to their utmost efforts upon the debatable ground. It was on this ground that the issue was determined, and by the vote in the doubtful districts that the result must be fairly judged. The election, however, undoubtedly indicated a vigorous growth of the radical anti-Southern and anti-slavery sentiment, and showed that Illinois was no longer to be controlled by the elements on which Douglas had relied in former years. While, therefore, it was unquestionably a Douglas victory in every sense, it was a victory which had been achieved by the hardest work and which depended very much more upon the personal hold he had succeeded in getting than upon his ability to take the voters with him.

He was already approximating to the dangerous position of the politician who is without a party, and who must rely upon personal admiration or sympathy in order to maintain his place.

CHAPTER XIV

BREAKING WITH THE SOUTH

ALTHOUGH Douglas had apparently achieved a triumph over Lincoln, the victory was not as satisfactory and conclusive as he had hoped to make it. This was for the reason that Douglas had been battling for his political existence, while Lincoln, with his eyes on the future, had merely participated in the first campaign of a great struggle to which the remainder of his life was now to be given. Had Douglas failed to secure his reëlection, he would have been for the time at least hopelessly out of the race. Presidential aspirations might then have been regarded as only a chapter of private personal history. Douglas, although so great a figure on the national stage, would undoubtedly, like so many other defeated senators, have slowly and with difficulty taken up the profession from which he had been lured away by the prizes of politics, or would have spent his time in plotting and contriving to get back again into the life from which he had been excluded. He had staked far more than Lincoln, and his victory left him in a less favorable position than he had previously occupied. The admissions he had made during the campaign, the slightly but fundamentally altered position he had taken as a result of the constant pressure of his

antagonist, had materially changed his relation to national affairs. It was a striking commentary upon the result of the election that it was not on the whole distasteful to those Republican newspapers which were far enough from the scene of action to view things from a broad general standpoint. Such observers held that the election of Douglas was perhaps a good thing, because, in his present attitude of revolt, he would be able to do much harm to the party which he represented and would undoubtedly inflict such injury. There was truth in this philosophy, for Douglas like every man of strong and virile temperament had his personal following which regarded his interpretations of Democratic principle as the right ones. To such a personal following appeal could and would still be made for the aid that was necessary in maintaining and continuing the ascendency of the leader's personality. The effect could not be other than slowly to widen the rift which had already appeared within the previously compact Democratic organization.

It was but too true that Douglas's position in the electoral contest, while it had strengthened him locally, had diminished the devotedness of his Southern following. Shortly after the election he started upon a trip through the Southern states intending to visit Cuba and to return by way of New York. The trip was essentially political, notwithstanding that it was nominally for the purpose of restoring a good condition of health, his physical state being far from satisfactory. The journey took

him to the mouth of the Mississippi and from there to Havana, from which point he sailed for New York, and then traveled to Washington via Philadelphia and Baltimore. With his eye upon the forthcoming presidential contest, Douglas wished to estimate the probable strength of his candidacy in the Southern states, while the question of Cuban annexation, then acute, suggested to him the possibility of another "issue" which might be used as a basis for political activity in the near future. He returned to Washington somewhat reassured as to the attitude of the Southern states toward him. He had spoken in several of the principal Southern cities as well as at points between New York and Washington and had been very cordially heard. Yet it was manifest that the sentiments which called forth the strongest approval from Southern listeners were those party generalities which would have been acceptable almost anywhere. The slavery position that he had assumed during the Lincoln debate was unacceptable to the extremists, who felt that he had not made good his Kansas attitude or sufficiently supported the views with respect to the South which he more than any other man in the Senate had developed prior to the Lecompton controversy. The effervescent greetings of audiences in the Southern states were apparently not too seriously taken by Douglas, for he much more accurately than many later statesmen had gauged the meaning of Southern hospitality, and recognized the distinct line that was drawn between personal regard and civil-

ity on the one hand and political support on the other. He was in fact far more inclined to consider the Southern wing of the United States Senate as the real index of his political support in the Southern states. In this slavery group in the Senate, Douglas found but cold comfort on his return, for the memory of the Lecompton controversy was fresh and vivid, while the President was exceedingly embittered against him. So far had the hostility to Douglas developed, that during his absence he had been deposed from his chairmanship of the Committee on Territories,[1] a position he had held throughout the whole period of his membership in the Senate. That he did not find in the Southern states sufficient popular feeling to warrant him in appealing from the Southern congressional leaders to their constituents was indicated by his silence under this marked and unusual affront.

While Douglas thus thought it best to ignore an incident which might have been used as the basis of an effort to define his own position in Congress more exactly, for the sake, if possible, of recovering lost ground in a quiet and steady process of growth, the position of the party was not such that it could successfully waive its differences of opinion and await the healing which time might bring. The differences within the party were seemingly as irreconcilable as were those dividing the two great parties in national affairs. Cuban annexation now presented itself as an issue for settlement. It of-

[1] Rhodes, Vol. II, p. 355.

fered in many particulars the same problems which had been thrusting themselves upon the Senate for years and which taken together now definitely pointed to an "irrepressible conflict." A bill for the purchase of Cuba had been framed by the Foreign Affairs Committee, the appropriation carried for that purpose being $30,000,000, and this received the earnest support of Douglas, who bent himself to work under the leadership of Senator Slidell, the chairman of the committee and a leading figure in the anti-Douglas faction of the party. Douglas had already attempted to gain Southern support by reasserting that Cuba naturally belonged to the American continent, a statement he had made during his stay in New Orleans. The fair inference from what was then said was that slavery would naturally exist in Cuba and might be established there, subject to the terms and conditions of the constitutional doctrine as to the local control of slavery which he himself had expounded. The discussion of Cuba and the question of its annexation with or without slavery would have been, as Douglas undoubtedly saw, a far better and more promising basis on which to continue the slavery controversy than was afforded by the Kansas situation. Had it been possible to occupy the short session of 1858–1859 with Cuban discussion, particularly in its bearing upon slavery, much would have been gained from the tactical standpoint, and Douglas would have been afforded as good an opportunity as he could have wished for regaining his

hold upon the waning sympathy of the Southern section of the party.

This was not to be. Interesting as the question of Cuban annexation was, the immediate imminence of the slavery question as applied to the mainland of the United States gave it a commanding position and importance which could not be transferred to any other issue. Late in February, when it was hoped that the session might expire without the further exploitation of party differences, the clash of factions was renewed. Senator Hale of New Hampshire had offered an amendment to an appropriation bill as a means of reviving the slavery discussion and, as if by preconcerted signal, the bitter controversy was resumed.[1] The question was whether adequate protection was to be afforded to slave property existing in the territories.[2] Senator Brown of Mississippi undertook to discuss this matter and to take issue with Douglas's "Freeport doctrine" in which he had affirmed the idea that "slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere unless it is supported by local police regulations. Those police regulations can only be established by the local legislature; and if the people are opposed to slavery, they will elect representatives to that body who will by unfriendly legislation effectually prevent the introduction of it into their midst." Brown felt that this was not an adequate view. He desired that full protection should be guaranteed

[1] Rhodes, Vol. II, p. 355.
[2] *Congressional Globe*, 2d Sess., 35th Cong., p. 1244.

by the Federal government to slave property in the territories. This he said was an "obligation . . . upon Congress." Menacingly, he remarked that, in case he could not obtain the rights guaranteed in this respect under the Constitution of the United States, he should be forced to the conclusion that the Constitution was a failure, the Union a despotism, and under those conditions he would be "prepared to retire from the concern."

It was now necessary for Douglas to determine in his own mind upon a choice of conduct which he had undoubtedly hoped to avoid making. Were he to remain silent, the "Freeport doctrine" might stand or fall as best it could, leaving its defense to other Northern Democrats of whom Brown had requested an expression of opinion. It is not likely that any one of these Democrats would have rushed to the defense, in any satisfactory way, of a peculiar doctrine developed by Douglas as the result of his own special political necessities. Silence, therefore, would have permitted the party practically to repudiate the "Freeport doctrine." It was necessary, if he were to maintain his leadership, to support the doctrine, and Douglas, perceiving this situation, took the floor in answer. In plain language, he told the Southerners that he could not accept the view of the extreme pro-slavery party, and, voicing in so many words what others were only thinking, he distinctly foreshadowed the election of 1860, remarking that it was impossible to carry a Northern Democratic state for a principle

which would compel the people of a territory to accept slavery when they were opposed to it.

With much force, Jefferson Davis, the former ally of Douglas, hastened to point out the inconsistency of the senator from Illinois in refusing to discriminate between various classes of property as such. Douglas had asserted that there could be no distinction between the protection accorded to dry-goods, horses, cattle or slaves in the territories, but Davis noted that the question went far beyond this interpretation and raised the fundamental issue of the right of citizens to hold slaves. Non-intervention, he said, was no longer possible as a practical guide for national conduct, nor would he vote for any candidate who stood upon a platform so constructed. The issue was more and more clearly drawn, and the colloquy between Davis and Douglas increased in bitterness, until Davis plainly said to his antagonist that with the views he now advocated, the vote of Mississippi would necessarily be withheld from him in any future struggle for the presidency. Commenting sharply upon the heretical tenets which Douglas had been obliged to embrace during his struggle with Lincoln, he keenly noted that although Douglas had been given a chance to recant or to explain away what he had said on the stump in Illinois, he was now "as full of heresy as he once was of adherence to the doctrine of popular sovereignty." Douglas in this debate was tolerably well supported by the Northern and Western Democrats and the incident went far toward indicat-

ing with greater clearness than ever before the ultra-radical position of the extreme Southern element in the Senate. Party policies were now permitted to suffer as a result of the absorption in the all-consuming slavery controversy and of the extension of party differences on that question to other issues for the purpose of striking factional blows. It had been hoped to pass the Pacific Railroad bill which Douglas had favored, but this failed, while an advance in the tariff proved to be impracticable in spite of what was considered an urgent party necessity.[1] The whole scheme of legislation went awry, and it was more and more accepted as a necessity that the party should reach some conclusion within itself about the great controlling question of the dividing line between Federal and local authority in its bearing upon sovereignty in the territories, or, in other words, should reach a decision upon slavery and its future.

Douglas had been far too closely pressed during the debate to neglect the weak points in his own position. The taunts of Davis and others had cut him. He knew that it was necessary in some way to ensure the general acceptance of his "Freeport doctrine." In the Senate he had done what he could, but with little success, despite the nominal adherence of the Northern and Western Democrats. In Illinois, his ideas had received some favor, but Illinois was only a single state. Douglas determined to prepare a careful exposition of his doc-

[1] Rhodes, Vol. II, pp. 359–360.

trine and this he finally set forth in *Harper's Monthly Magazine*[1] in an article which bore the significant title "The Dividing Line between Federal and Local Authority." The proper principle to be accepted was there stated by Douglas to be as follows: "That every distinct political community, loyal to the Constitution and the Union, is entitled to all the rights, privileges, and immunities of self-government in respect to their local concerns and internal polity, subject only to the Constitution of the United States."[2] In support of this principle, Douglas rehearsed with detail the conditions under which the Colonies had dealt with African slavery, and then coming down to more recent times he discussed the compromise measures of 1850 and the Kansas–Nebraska act of 1854. He sought to vindicate his own action on the Kansas–Nebraska act with special reference to the section which prescribed and defined the power of the territorial legislature, and he struck a blow at the position of President Buchanan by quoting from the latter's communication accepting the nomination, in which he had asserted the right of the people of the territories to "decide for themselves whether slavery shall or shall not exist within their limits." Referring to the position assumed by Davis, Douglas showed that he had distinctly drawn a line between those who contended for the right to carry slaves into the territories and to hold them in defiance of

[1] September, 1859, Vol. 19, pp. 519–537.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 537.

the local law, and those who contended that such right was subject to the local law of the territory. He quoted from Davis paragraphs in which the latter admitted that national legislation could not "confer power beyond that which exists in Congress," although he had also argued that "if our right to carry slaves into these territories be a constitutional right, it is our first duty to maintain it."

Although the magazine article was naturally much more carefully prepared than the *ex tempore* speeches which Douglas had delivered on the stump and in the Senate, and was better supported by citation and illustration, it was not of a character that would command general attention. The publication of the article had undoubtedly been intended to appeal to the thinking popular audience among which *Harper's* was supposed to circulate, but if it was read by the rank and file of the subscribers it attracted no particular notice. As usual, however, an article by a man of national prominence in a current publication led to reply, and there were rebuttals and sur-rebuttals, Douglas himself finally falling back from the calmer heights of the constitutional lawyer to the lower ground of the political controversialist. The discussion, moreover, was too minute and detailed to gain public interest and the most important result of this revival of the slavery question was the attention which it provoked from Lincoln. So far as the article had secured readers it had obtained them

among the Northern and Western Democrats and Republicans, so that the essay was rather more truly another round in the Lincoln-Douglas battle than a further prolongation of the controversy with Davis. In the autumn election contest in Ohio both Lincoln and Douglas were given prominent places, and Lincoln particularly sought to undermine the argument in the *Harper's Monthly* article. Rhodes expresses the opinion that he "utterly demolished" the basis of Douglas's reasoning, while Nicolay and Hay properly regard the controversy as a continuation of the debates of the preceding year, and note that Lincoln merely added "searching comments on the newer positions and points to which Douglas had since advanced."[1] Lincoln held that Douglas was insidiously laying a foundation for slavery in the territories and the newer states, and scathingly criticized Douglas for regarding the slavery question as of relatively small importance. He particularly complained of Douglas's view that there was no necessary wrong in slavery, and added: "We must not interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists, because the Constitution forbids it. . . . We must not withhold an efficient fugitive slave law . . . but we must prevent the outspreading of the institution . . . the revival of the African slave trade and the enacting by Congress of a territorial slave code."[2]

[1] *Abraham Lincoln, A History*, Vol. II, p. 185.

[2] The speeches of Lincoln at Columbus and Cincinnati are

With Lincoln pressing him hard in Ohio, Douglas was equally hard pressed by the administration, which set Attorney-General Black to work with an anonymous pamphlet deprecating Douglas's *Harper's Magazine* essay as a crude production lacking in legal ability. This reply was published in Washington and received a considerable circulation. In the Southern states, however, Douglas was likewise sharply criticized and in California the debate upon his positions surpassed in bitterness that which was carried on in any other part of the Union. Senator Broderick, the leader of one section of the California Democrats, and Gwin, the leader of the other, engaged in a struggle which finally resulted in a duel to the death between Broderick and Judge Terry of the California Supreme Court. Douglas's doctrine played a commanding part in the campaign there, despite the prominence of local issues and bitter personalities. The Southern element in the long run was substantially worsted, the Douglas Democrats and the Republicans being emphatically in the majority and later guiding the state into the path of allegiance to the Union when war had become inevitable. In spite of some tentative and partial successes in places where local issues aided, or where personal allegiance advanced his cause, or where peculiarly favorable conditions prevailed, Douglas evidently lost ground during

quoted in part in Nicolay and Hay and are given in full in *Political Debates between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas*, pp. 240–268.

the campaign of 1859. It was a bad omen for the outcome which he hoped for in the approaching national convention, and before the year had closed it was plain that only some unusually fortunate turn could restore the prestige of the Democrats or secure to Douglas that position as titular leader of the party to which he had so long aspired. But history was making fast and this unexpected turn was promptly given.

John Brown had gradually developed the idea of an invasion of the South and had, during the years 1856–1859, secured a supply of arms and ammunition for use in his prospective attempt. In Kansas, he had had the rough border experience and had gained the hatred of the South which both animated and, as he believed, fitted, him for his attempt to begin a civil war designed to liberate the slaves.

On July 4, 1859, Brown had finally settled in Maryland near Harper's Ferry, establishing there a depot of ammunition and supplies. On October 16, 1859, he attacked Harper's Ferry, cutting the telegraph wires and taking possession of the town, but a small body of about eighty marines from the Washington Navy Yard, under command of Colonel Robert E. Lee, was at once dispatched to the scene and made short work of the "invaders," killing ten and capturing seven. Brown was promptly tried, convicted, sentenced and hanged, his death occurring on December 2d, while Congress with its usual ineptitude promptly appointed

an investigating committee to look into facts with which the whole country was instantly familiar. The incident was in itself of no importance except as it furnished a spark to set off the high explosives with which national politics were then undermined. The committee appointed by Congress included Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, Mason of Virginia, and Fitch of Indiana, all Democrats of course, together with Collamer of Vermont and Doolittle of Wisconsin. As usual the effort was made by the majority of the committee to fasten the unlawful acts of Brown's followers upon the Republican party, while the Republicans regarded the occurrence as an aftermath of the slavery controversy in Kansas. The undoubted effect of the incident and of the lucubrations of the committee was to sharpen the political discussion and, more important still, to concentrate it ever more pointedly upon slavery.

The congressional committee was not able to recommend any legislation designed to prevent similar raids in the future because, as the report ran, it found the invasion of Virginia to be "simply the act of lawless ruffians under the sanction of no public or political authority,"[1] but Douglas, unable to keep out of the controversy, hastened to urge the passage of a bill which would punish conspiracies in one state or territory against the government, people or property of another. Lincoln withheld his judgment for a time, but as soon as he had had opportunity to gauge the feeling

[1] Nicolay and Hay, Vol. II, p. 210.

of the nation, said in a speech at Cooper Institute on February 27, 1860, that the John Brown invasion was "absurd," the result of the efforts of an "enthusiast" who had brooded over the "oppression of a people till he fancied himself commissioned by heaven to liberate them." Lincoln expressly repudiated responsibility for the John Brown affair, but it had an undoubted effect in embittering a section of public feeling against the Republican party, and in driving some to the opinion that a conservative Democrat of the Douglas type would be safer as a presidential choice than a Republican. Within the Democratic party itself, the effect of the incident upon the more conservative minds seems to have been mainly that of producing alarm and enforcing the necessity of reaching some accommodation by moderate means. Extreme Southern Democrats considered the episode practically a threat of war and as justifying their own radical position. They were, however, not yet ready for war, and many men who had unthinkingly gone with Davis, Brown and the other extremists in threats of violence and secession hesitated when the final step was suggested. On the whole, the Harper's Ferry episode and the circulation of certain partisan documents like Helper's *Impending Crisis*, which was endorsed by numerous influential Republicans, operated to aid Douglas, because they aggravated the issue between the extreme anti-slavery wing of the Republican party and the extreme pro-slavery wing of the Democrats.

Thereby the necessity of electing a Democratic President upon a platform of moderate character which would to some extent unite the Northern and Southern wings of the party, was emphasized. The election of a Republican candidate, it seemed probable, would drive the country still nearer to war, by putting in charge of the government a group which had already shown a distinct sectional and partisan bias.

Under these conditions, it was obviously true that Douglas was the logical candidate of the Democratic party. There had, however, been no reconciliation between him and the ultra-Southern senators on the floor and they continued to denounce him for his heretical compromising with the opponents of slavery. But the extreme tendencies of the Southerners were now growing so marked that Douglas, stronger in the confidence of popular support than he had been, felt able to defy them. On the floor of the Senate, he boldly stated his position, asserting his willingness to accept the nomination, but refusing to recant or to give pledges of a change of heart with reference to slavery. Efforts to force him to commit himself were made both by the pro-slavery extremists and by New England and other anti-slavery propagandists, but to no purpose. Douglas definitely settled back upon the "Freeport doctrine" and more and more indicated his reluctance to discuss the slavery question in its general aspects, insisting that it be dealt with everywhere as a local issue. This position commended itself strongly to conservative voters

in the Northern and Western states in whom the abstract spirit of reform was not very pronounced. During the early weeks of 1860, the Western section of the party rallied to his aid, electing Douglas delegations to the forthcoming national convention. This still further confirmed him in maintaining his own position. Signs of weakness, however, appeared in New York and Illinois, where contesting delegations were chosen, and it was early apparent that his success in gaining the approval of public opinion could be made fruitful only by means of a most bitter struggle in the convention. For this Douglas was fully prepared, realizing as he did that the crucial moment of his career had come and that, unless he now secured his party nomination, it would probably never be his portion. He therefore determined to accept the issue.

CHAPTER XV

THE LAST BATTLE

THE convention was to be held at Charleston, S. C. Delegates from the North and West made it a point to pass through Washington on their way to the place of meeting, and adherents of Douglas who were not regularly appointed delegates also resorted to Charleston in great numbers. It was recognized that the party was now at a turning-point, while the career of Douglas, with all that it meant to his followers, was in an equally critical position. He must go on and must succeed. Probably most Democrats, even among the extreme Southern men, believed that they could carry the election with him as their candidate, but they were not willing to accept him in that capacity. They preferred to take the chances with some other who would be more sympathetic with their ideas and who would, if elected, assure them of the carrying out of their policies.

On the whole, the Democratic convention at Charleston was a representative gathering. According to Rhodes,[1] "the politicians who came were of the better class; lawyers, men of business and planters of large influence and high character in their respective communities, though little known

[1] Rhodes, Vol. II, pp. 441–442.

beyond their own states, were glad to have the honor of assisting in the deliberations of their party's national council. The selections had for the most part been made with care, and, except in New York and Pennsylvania, the action of the minor conventions that met to choose delegates was little disturbed by the operations of machine politics." A Tammany delegation from New York and a few congressmen constituted the representation of the routine political element, but they were relatively weak. In such a meeting, composed of minds of good average quality, it was possible to test the sentiment of the country with unusual accuracy, and while the meeting was not characterized by the same technical bickerings that had marked scenes in both the Senate and the House, it was soon evident that Northern and Southern Democrats were not harmonious; the Northerners because of the presence of slavery which some of them now saw for the first time in real life, the Southerners because of the comparative plainness and lack of culture which they found in the Northern delegates. In all, about six hundred members were present in the convention, three hundred and three, the number of electors, being the total vote, each state casting votes equal to its electoral vote.[1]

Early in the discussions it became plain that Douglas by his recent changes of position had practically consolidated the Northwest behind him, and would be able to control the whole party,

[1] Rhodes, Vol. II, pp. 441–442.

barring its extreme Southern section, but that his attitude on the question of Kansas and the issues that had later been linked with it, had hopelessly alienated that section. Deliberations had begun on the 23d of April and canvasses showed that Douglas had a majority of the delegates numerically, but that his opponents had seventeen out of thirty-three states. Caleb Cushing became the president of the convention, and as there was no disagreement about the desirability of determining the platform before the candidate was named, the Resolutions Committee began its sessions in earnest. Hardly had the work of the committee been started, when it appeared that among its members there was the same division of opinion as had already appeared in the convention itself, and in Congress. Douglas dominated one faction in the committee while Jefferson Davis controlled the other, determined as the latter was to stand by the resolutions which Davis had submitted to the Senate on the 2d of February, 1860. In one of these resolutions he had asserted that there was no power either in Congress or in a territorial legislature, directly or indirectly, to curtail the constitutional right whereby citizens of slave states were entitled to take slaves into the territories, and had laid down the principle that it was incumbent upon the Federal government to furnish to slave-owners just as to the proprietors of every other kind of property, the protection they required for safeguarding it.

Five days of heated discussion on the part of the

Resolutions Committee led only to the rendering of majority and minority reports, on April 27, 1860, the former asserting the substance of the Davis resolutions, the latter reaffirming the Cincinnati platform of June 2, 1856, in which it was declared that "the Democratic party will resist all attempts at renewing in Congress or out of it, the agitation of the slavery question," endorsing the Dred Scott decision, and upholding the authority of the Supreme Court. When the two reports appeared on the floor, the controversy resulted in the assertion by the Southern delegates that they would not allow their interests to be overwhelmed by the men of the North and West. They would not suffer what they called the poison of Abolitionism to spread throughout the party, and they charged that the admission of the wrongful character of slavery, tacitly made by many of the Northern Democrats, lay at the root of all the evil. The minority of the committee, though at first calm and dispassionate in their argument, finally reached somewhat the same level of passion that had been early arrived at by the men of the extreme South. A long debate which filled the rest of the week, including the sending back of the rival platforms to the Resolutions Committee, resulted in no compromise, save the suggestion, made near the beginning of the convention by the Southerners and now renewed with great force, that in case the platform of the minority must be accepted in order to carry the Northern Democratic states, Southerners would

consent upon condition that they should be given a candidate who would be sound, according to their own ideas, upon the slavery question. To this proposal Douglas and his followers—determined as they were to win the reward of their labors—opposed a united front. Aside from the purely personal element for which they were struggling, they had some basis of logic in the assertion that their platform and their candidate were inseparable, and that to attempt to run a pro-slavery man upon the Douglas platform would expose them to ridicule as well as defeat. The Douglas platform was finally accepted, 165 to 138, on Monday, April 30th. A round dozen delegates from slavery states voted in its favor, while there were thirty from free states who voted against it; this was the result of Buchanan's anti-Douglas efforts in the Northern constituencies. The action was at once followed by the withdrawal from the convention of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina, Florida, Texas and Arkansas, and finally Georgia. This great defection left but 253 votes in the convention and of these 202 were necessary to a choice. Douglas, however, could not get at any time above 152½, although balloting was continued for several days and no fewer than fifty-seven distinct ballots were taken. Adjournments, on the part of the Douglas wing of the convention to meet in Baltimore on June 18th, and of the slavery wing to meet in Richmond somewhat earlier, were at length taken and the convention broke up.

The disappointing outcome at Charleston might well have moved Douglas to retire from the contest, had he been more given to vacillation or less certain of his own sufficiency. But the result of the convention had merely strengthened his determination to maintain his own position; he believed that he might draw away from the Republican party the more conservative elements which had passed over to it from the Democrats.

Davis was now once more put forward by the extreme Southern element in the Senate to hamper and embarrass Douglas, and to assail the moderate platform which his friends had endeavored to have adopted by the Charleston convention. A savage attack by Davis upon the platform, coupled with unpleasant allusions to Douglas himself, was the striking incident of May 17th, and was the signal for a long and bitter rejoinder by Douglas in which he considered the recent history of the party[1] and asserted that the attempt to nominate him was necessary, if only as a vindication from the charges openly made on the floor of the Senate as well as implied in the action taken when he had been removed from the chairmanship of the Committee on Territories. While the personal portions of this speech, and the review of the constitutional questions centring around slavery were wearisome and tedious to the last degree, there were parts which had vital interest. Douglas at last openly admitted that the position of the Southern pro-slavery wing

[1] *Congressional Globe*, 1st Sess., 36th Cong., pp. 2145–2156.

of the party at the Democratic convention could mean only secession and the breaking up of the Union. He warned the Southerners that they were better off under existing conditions than they could ever hope to be again, and Davis, stung by the manner of Douglas, disclaimed a desire for secession, charging his antagonist with being responsible for the threat of disunion through his continued effort to press his own candidacy and his own theory of slavery under the Constitution upon a reluctant party.

The resolutions of Davis, offered on February 2d, to which reference has been made in connection with the Charleston convention, were adopted by the Democratic senators against the wishes of Douglas and of Pugh of Ohio who alone opposed them. Many voted for the resolutions without actually believing in them, but with the idea of placating the Southern element and giving an appearance of party harmony which did not exist. A further attempt to make the action thus taken entirely nugatory that it might appear to the country as a purely academic proposition, was the acceptance of a resolution to the effect that slave property in the territories was already safe without the interference of Congress. In spite of the attempt to rob the action of most of its significance, however, the adoption of the Davis resolutions was a source of alarm to the country, while the course of the Republican convention at Chicago in nominating Abraham Lincoln made the situation still

more acute. This step had been taken[1] on the 18th of May, Lincoln receiving 364 votes, and the nomination was promptly made unanimous.

Douglas, with genuine political insight, recognized that the party of his opponents had taken the course which was most calculated to endear it to the public mind, and that Lincoln, whose power he had felt in the Illinois debates, would prove a formidable foe in those very states where his own strength was supposed to be greatest. He realized also that the choice of so distinct and positive an opponent of Southern ideas would render his own pro-slavery antagonists more insistent than ever upon a candidate of equally positive views, and less inclined to accept one whom they considered a compromiser or trimmer like himself. He told his political friends in Washington that he recognized Lincoln as both able and honest, and in reviewing conditions in his own mind he found them so difficult as to render it necessary that he should at least make some offer of withdrawal before the Baltimore convention on the 18th of June. Thinking thus, he reluctantly and ungraciously wrote to the controlling members of the Tammany delegation from New York, that if his retirement could preserve the unity of the party, he would prefer to see his name dropped and that of some more suitable Democrat substituted. The New York delegation was in a peculiarly significant position, because of an effort which was now making to admit to the

[1] Nicolay and Hay, Vol. II, p. 277.

convention some of the delegates who had withdrawn at Charleston, and who, having repented, wished to resume their places at Baltimore, as well as sundry delegations pledged to Douglas which had meanwhile been appointed in certain other states. The Tammany men, after carefully considering the situation, determined to stand by Douglas and the new delegations from the Southern states were admitted. This practically settled the contest[1] and at once further withdrawals began. Men from the border states like Kentucky and Maryland, as well as some from North Carolina and Tennessee, now retired, and Douglas's nomination promptly followed. The men who had with-

[1] Halstead, *Caucuses of* 1860, p. 227, gives the best survey of the situation :

"When the seceders appeared at Baltimore, pursuant to the program of the Southern congressmen, advertised in their manifesto and perfected at Richmond, the contest between the antagonisms which had been fully developed at Charleston, resolved itself into a simple one on credentials, between the original Charleston delegates, and the delegations from several states, provided to fill up the gaps caused by secession, with the deciding vote in the hand of Dean Richmond, chairman of the New York delegation. Richmond & Co., while able to say whether the convention should be consolidated by admitting the original Southern delegates, or disrupted by excluding the seceders, could not say, in case of consolidation, who should be the nominee. The friends of Douglas were without confidence in Richmond ('the Dean'), and were only prevented from denouncing him by the appreciation of their dependence upon him. If he slaughtered Douglas, they had the power and will to slaughter his man, and would have prevented the nomination of any candidate for whom he, in connection with the South, might have thrown his influence. Hence the hesitation of New York—her long consultations, her vacillation, and retrograde movements. She struggled for a compromise, but

drawn were joined by the majority of those who had originally retired from the Charleston convention and hastened to nominate Breckinridge for the presidency, selecting Lane of Oregon as a vice-presidential candidate, while the Douglas wing of the party added Johnson, a Georgian, as his associate.

Douglas's letter of acceptance sought to make the point that the pro-slavery men were essentially sectional in their appeal, and that his own branch of the party was the true national Democratic organization. This idea he based on the view that special Federal protection of slavery was essentially a sectional issue, and a demand for the con-

both sides were so fierce that compromising was out of the question. The Southerners thought they had compromised enough in coming to Baltimore, and condescending to ask admission into the convention from which they had seceded. The friends of Douglas could not be expected to throw away the last chance for their candidate, by making up the convention, so far as possible, out of its original materials. Such a compromise as that would have been, not a capitulation, but a surrender at discretion. They did, at the solicitation, indeed, the dictatorial demand of New York, back out from two propositions, and were sorry for it afterward. They had taken the ground that no delegate accredited to the Richmond convention should be allowed to enter that at Baltimore. They were drawn from this point by the strong case of Mississippi. They had also declared the necessity of a pledge or understanding, that all delegates entering the convention should make or assent to, to the effect that they would support the nominees of the convention. After urging this for a few hours, and observing the explosive excitement engendered by it, they withdrew it. They also, or rather New York, succumbed respecting their delegation from Georgia. Yet it was impossible to satisfy the demands of the South and preserve the unity of the convention, without passing under the yoke of Yancey, and they could not consent to that humiliation."

sideration of one group of states to the disadvantage and against the wishes of the main body of states. The trouble in Douglas's letter lay in the fact that the whole question at issue in national politics was now essentially a sectional issue and could not be made anything else. Sectionalism had itself become a national question. The utter impossibility of ignoring slavery, or the constitutional issues which had become associated with it, was seen in connection with the efforts of the so-called Constitutional Union party, which in a convention at Baltimore had put forward a ticket with Bell of Tennessee and Everett of Massachusetts as candidates for President and Vice-President respectively, while it entirely ignored the slavery question. Its platform was "the Constitution of the country, the union of the states, and the enforcement of the laws." That the time was now past when any such platitudinous evasion would serve the purposes of national politics was promptly seen in the fact that the Constitutional Union party attracted little support. It received fewer votes in the election than did any of the other tickets now in the field. The effort to disclaim a desire to break up the Union was, however, characteristic of every one of the parties, and Douglas still continued to urge the necessity of reuniting the Democrats upon broad national lines, designed to maintain the Union. Lincoln insisted upon the inviolability of the Constitution while Breckinridge and Bell adopted the same attitude, Breckinridge urging "the Constitu-

tion and equality of the states" and Bell "the maintenance of the Constitution and the Union." Buchanan promptly attached himself to Breckinridge and his personal followers began a bitter onslaught upon Douglas.[1]

The disastrous result of the conventions at Charleston and Baltimore had for the moment been exceedingly discouraging to Douglas. He, however, soon rallied. His success in political contests, almost uniform throughout his whole life, had given him a rare self-confidence and he saw in the division of his antagonists into three parties a decided hope for himself as the head of a group laying claims to national character, boasting many adherents in practically every state in the Union, and appealing strongly to conservative men everywhere. He foresaw a possibility that the election might be thrown into the House of Representatives, and gave orders to his followers to cultivate the friendship of the Constitutional Union party, while showing no quarter to the Breckinridge group. In the East and in New England he thought he had excellent chances, and in New York the outlook seemed hopeful, owing to the friendship of some influential newspapers and the power of the Tammany organization. Douglas, moreover, understood that his campaign would lack something of the support and vigor possessed by the Democratic national organization in former days and he determined to

[1] Nicolay and Hay, Vol. II, Chap. 16, give a clear account of the political situation.

take the stump himself, thus violating precedent, but arousing the popular enthusiasm which he had usually been able to inspire by his appealing and overmastering personality. He traveled through New England, speaking at Boston, Cambridge, Springfield, Concord and at Troy, N. Y., as well as elsewhere. He addressed the crowds sometimes without primary reference to politics, but usually managing to inject some acute comments on the national situation, while at other times he delivered out-and-out political speeches along his own favorite lines. Later he started for the South, passing through Virginia,[1] North Carolina, and other states, and, returning to the West, he spoke in Ohio,

[1] Mr. Henry Adams (Massachusetts Historical Society, *Proceedings*, April–June, 1910, p. 665) has given an unfamiliar explanation of this trip which, from one point of view, places Douglas in a very favorable light. Says Mr. Adams: "A wide-spread and intricate conspiracy existed against the government; so much was undoubted. Mr. Douglas and his friends denounced it openly, and traced it up to its source. For many years past, there has been, it is true, a class of men in the Southern states as in the Northern who have wished for disunion as a thing good in itself. But this class was always small and could never have obtained the control of a single state as long as the slave power ruled the country. But according to Mr. Douglas, when it became evident at the dissolution of the Baltimore Convention in the spring of 1860 that the Democratic party were to lose their omnipotent voice in the affairs of the nation, the leading statesmen in the Southern states framed a plan for the dissolution of the Union. . . . To defeat this conspiracy had been the object of Mr. Douglas's journey to Virginia and the South. . . . His object was to break up this Southern combination and to throw the state of Virginia . . . into the hands of the Southern Whigs. His manœuvre was only partially successful. . . . Still the main object was gained."

Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and elsewhere. Still later, on the 19th of October, he turned southward again, speaking in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and at points *en route*.

The journey through the South was from the first discouraging. He had been interrogated about secession almost as soon as he stepped upon the soil of Virginia. There, however, he had struck a blow for the maintenance of the Union, by answering one who asked him at Norfolk what the South should do in case of the election of Lincoln, that the choice of the Republican candidate would not justify any attempt at dissolution ; while to a second question, whether in case of secession such action should be resisted, he responded that everything should be done to maintain the supremacy of the laws. Although he had been favorably treated at Richmond, as he moved farther South he felt more keenly the force of the growing spirit of secession and was less and less disposed to look with hope to the future. As he turned northward again and westward, there was a renewal of the enthusiastic scenes of earlier days. At Kalamazoo, Mich., he was met by an immense crowd [1] which escorted him through the principal streets, and in his later speeches in the Northwest the personal endorsement greeting him was very strong. Returning to the South as election time drew near, he again encountered strong per-

[1] New York *Tribune*, Oct. 17, 1860. References to local conditions contained in the preceding pages are chiefly drawn from the reports of the *Tribune*'s correspondents.

sonal hostility, and at times even ran the risk of violence. That an effort was made to wreck his train was his individual belief.[1] Although the personal conduct of his canvass had been objected to at the beginning, men became accustomed to it after a time and criticism partly ceased. The strain, however, was terrific, and Douglas returned to the bad habits which had been growing upon him for some years. He drank freely, and at a point in Indiana through which a train bearing two political acquaintances was passing he entered the car late at night and sought to have the men join him in a bottle of whiskey which he brought with him. Upon their refusal he partially consumed it alone. It could not be possible that a lack of dignity so pronounced as this would be favorably regarded even by the somewhat rough and ready constituency to which Douglas spoke in many of the places where he had journeyed. Perhaps the recognition which had come to him comparatively early in the autumn that Lincoln would certainly win, had altered his own view of himself as a probable President and had led him to the adoption of a kind of conduct from which he would otherwise have abstained. During the later days of the campaign, after certain state elections had been carried by the Republicans, the conviction deepened in Douglas's mind that hope was now gone and that his only mission in the contest must be that of creating sentiment against secession, and so far as

[1] Johnson, *Douglas*, p. 439.

possible of neutralizing the dangerous influence of Jefferson Davis and his followers.

The first word of Douglas's conclusive defeat reached him while he was in Mississippi. His mind had already grown so thoroughly accustomed to the idea that the event did not then have the stunning effect it would otherwise have had. He started for the North almost immediately, speaking at a few places *en route* and urging acquiescence in the verdict at the polls. He freely admitted his regret for the election of Lincoln and his dislike of Lincoln's anti-slavery views. As the returns of the election came in, it was possible for him to urge with much force that the South had comparatively little to fear after all, since the Republican party was in the minority and Lincoln had simply won by a plurality instead of by a majority. He wisely refrained from calling much attention to the fact that had Breckinridge and the extreme pro-slavery wing supported him instead of breaking away from the party, the day might have been carried. Douglas was far too sagacious politically to try to aggravate the intense feeling of the South, for the sake of the cheap satisfaction of establishing the accurate character of his own predictions. Yet in private conversations he admitted that he was losing courage, and this discouragement deepened as further details of the election came in. Douglas had received a total of 1,376,957 in the popular vote against Lincoln's 1,866,452, Breckinridge's 849,781, and Bell's 588,879. In the electoral vote, however, one hundred and eighty went to

Lincoln, seventy-two to Breckinridge, thirty-nine to Bell, and only twelve to Douglas. Douglas had obtained nine votes in Missouri, and three in New Jersey. The outcome showed his actual position exceedingly well. He had represented the general, wide-spread opinion of those whose minds revolted from warfare, and who would have preserved the Union at any cost, even that of a principle.[1] Yet, as the returns also showed, these conservatives were not sufficiently numerous to control the wild forces which were now working toward war, and practically at no point throughout the whole country were they superior to the combined extremists who would rule or ruin.

It had now become the foremost question with all thinking men how they were to shape their courses in the fierce battle that was impending. Above all else what should be done with reference to the question of secession? On that point, Douglas had already firmly and definitely committed himself. Secession would not be justified and must not take place; but should it be attempted, it must be put down by force. This view the defeated candidate firmly set himself to uphold. He passed rapidly to Washington, where he delivered an address in support of Lincoln, the newly-elected President. Secession had already been begun by the taking of preliminary steps in South Carolina. These had been so menacing as to alarm the commanders in charge of Federal garrisons, who called

[1] Stanwood, *A History of the Presidency*, pp. 296–297, for figures.

for aid in order that an actual clash might be avoided, but who found themselves blocked by the treacherous inertness of the reactionary President who still occupied the White House.

The indications of secession were, however, thus far no more serious than had been observed in other parts of the country at previous crises, and Douglas, in common with many other conservative men, still believed that the differences could somehow be reconciled. But the opening of Congress showed that the difference of opinion had become practically hopeless. Davis and others reiterated their former views and now plaintively added that secession was unavoidable because of their fear of Lincoln and what he might do. Some of the extreme Southerners made plain and direct statements that their states would leave the Union in the near future, and if obliged to do so would resort to force to establish their position. In the hope of a possible reconciliation, Douglas now adopted a new rôle. He no longer appeared on the floor in vituperation, nor did he engage with his customary pleasure and spirit in acrimonious discussion about the constitutional aspects of slavery. He sought to promote peace by asking the Southerners for a detailed statement specifying the points at which they took exception to the existing status, and when some matters were tentatively mentioned he joined heartily with his former pro slavery associates in denouncing the conditions at the North of which they complained. The more reasonable slavery men an-

swered to his call, and proposed the appointment of thirteen members of the Senate who should suggest measures that would be acceptable to all parties, and would serve as a basis of a reconciliation. The men selected for this committee were chosen in the usual fashion—so as to represent all opinions, a photograph of the same irreconcilable and conflicting mood of mind in which Congress at the moment found itself.

The committee included five Republicans headed by the extreme and self-important Seward, the two fire-eaters of the bourbon Southern group, Davis and Toombs, and three lay figures from the slaveholding but still doubtful commonwealths which wished to save the Union if they could, while Douglas himself with two satellites stood for the conservative Democracy of the North and South. Various resolutions were submitted to the committee and a considerable number of constitutional amendments came before them. Conspicuous in this program were the plans of compromise which had been urged by Senator Crittenden of Kentucky, himself now a member of the newly appointed committee. An integral feature of Crittenden's plan was the reëstablishment and extension of the boundary line which had been set in the Missouri Compromise. Here, however, the extreme partisans showed that compromise was to them but another name for insistence upon their own views. The Republicans voted against the amendments, and these of course were equally unsatisfactory to the extreme South-

erners. Douglas supported the whole of the program of compromise,[1] but without being in the least able to impress his views upon his associates.

The outcome of the committee's work seems to have convinced him of one thing about which he had previously been uncertain. He fully believed that the extreme Republicans of New England were as ready for war as were the men of the extreme South. So strongly did he hold this view that he was inclined to ascribe the tactics followed by the Northern Republicans to a desire to goad the South into secession, in order that they themselves might have unquestioned control in the Senate. As a last hope, Douglas submitted to the committee a scheme of his own for the settlement of the slavery question, which he now properly regarded as vital and not as an indifferent matter that might be settled by local communities as they pleased. In assenting to the report of the committee to the effect that no general compromise or scheme of reconciliation could be determined upon, Douglas, however, urged that a popular vote be taken with reference to the plan of adjustment suggested by Senator Crittenden. In speaking on this matter, he reverted to his original theory of slavery in its constitutional bearings and again asserted views designed to soothe the Southern extremists. His advance over former positions was seen in his frank recognition that the time had come when some disposition should be made of the issue,

[1] The report of this committee may be found in *Congressional Globe*, 2d Sess., 36th Cong., p. 114.

and that it had become too large and difficult to be further used as the basis for partisan struggles. The great and controlling problem now was how to maintain the United States intact.[1] To this everything else must be subordinated.

Yet while beseeching and entreating all to give up partisanship, Douglas himself was unable to control his own partisan tendencies. He charged the Republicans on the compromise committee with causing the whole trouble, and attempted to throw upon them the responsibility for the conditions which obtained as a result of the disagreement, and for the impending armed struggle. His arguments had no effect either upon the New England men and their followers or upon Davis, Toombs, and the others. Although secession was very evidently already becoming an accomplished fact, Douglas hoped against hope, and throughout the session sought to regard so far as possible the wishes of the Southern clique. Kansas had now once more applied for admission to the Union, presenting a constitution which had been duly framed and which would have added the state to the list of non-slavery commonwealths. Douglas attempted to secure the acceptance of the constitution, but perhaps in order to offset the effect of this action to which his former position necessarily bound him, he also offered a measure intended to amend the Fugitive Slave Law, strengthening that enactment at the point where it had proved weak. This olive branch was far from

[1] *Congressional Globe*, 2d Sess., 36th Cong., *passim*.

acceptable to the South, and Douglas's efforts only brought him into ridicule. So also when it came to creating the new territories of Colorado and New Mexico, a bill had been offered wherein the line had not been sharply drawn between slave and free territory and which would have left unsettled several doubtful points. It had been carelessly drafted, although it was framed upon the lines of a previous measure for which Douglas himself had been the sponsor. He desired to have accepted in place of it a substitute measure wherein practically all power was bestowed upon the people of the territory and the authority of the Federal government was greatly narrowed. Under the conditions the proposal was a decided concession to the Southern states, and was unquestionably objectionable to the Republicans. Nothing came of it, for the growing power of the Republicans enabled them to press their own plans forward to success, while the Southerners were less and less interested in the legislation of a nation in which they more and more felt that they had no part.[1]

Douglas's concern for, and active discussion of, the territorial measure, however, was rather a reminiscence of former days —the outcome of habits long formed, overflowing in a renewal of action of a

[1] Mr. Henry Adams, then a contemporary observer in Washington, said: "The New Mexico proposition was defeated by Southern union votes. . . . It had been proposed and adopted merely as a means of crushing the Crittenden measures."—*Proceedings* of Massachusetts Historical Society, April-June, 1910, p. 683.

kind which had already become familiar—than the result of a healthy interest in contemporary politics. As the disastrous Buchanan administration drew to a close, Douglas more fully realized that the question was now one of genuine warfare and the best way of conducting it. Although secession had actually been decreed in some cases, the Southern senators were holding their places in Congress as long as possible, partly for reasons of their own and partly to give time for their states to take further action. Davis and some of his associates from the far South had determined not to withdraw until they had regular notification of the secession of their states, and their formal farewell did not come until the 21st of January,[1] when he as the leader, finally regretting the step toward which he had long been tending and working, made a speech in the Senate expressive of his mental suffering. Various states followed from time to time. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas successively left the Union.[2] The first attempt at a Southern Confederacy came early in February, and on the 8th of that month Davis and Stephens were elected President and Vice-President of the new government in a congress held at Montgomery, Ala. By this time, the Senate had been considerably depleted in numbers, and Douglas's fast-fading hopes of peace had been entirely disappointed. War seemed to be unavoidable, for as early as the 9th of January the *Star of the West*,

[1] Rhodes, Vol. III, p. 271. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 272.

bearing a relief expedition for Fort Sumter, had been driven away by cannon shot, while other armed demonstrations had followed. Douglas saw that the question of actual war might depend in part upon the attitude of the new President and that there was at least a theoretical possibility of reaching an agreement with the Confederacy without the shedding of blood. He hoped that Lincoln as he took office would inspire confidence, and that it might be possible to hold a firm hand upon the South.

Thus the Buchanan administration drew to a close, Douglas himself placing more and more reliance upon the personality of his former rival and antagonist who was shortly to assume the direction of national affairs.

CHAPTER XVI

WITHOUT A PARTY

A NEW, and unhappily the last, phase of Douglas's stormy career in national politics had now opened. Like every other man in American public life, he had still to think of himself, and of himself in relation to a local constituency. It was this that had recalled him at the crucial moment from his pursuit of the pro-slavery support which he had hoped to use in his presidential aspirations. He was now left practically without a party, for, though his popular vote had been second only to that of Lincoln, he was unable to secure a following in Congress and was isolated. His popular vote had been based upon general considerations rather than upon his advocacy of particular measures, and the test which he had made during the last short session of the Buchanan administration had convinced him that the game he had been playing was no longer possible. Moreover, he was now aware that the sentiment of the country would not longer tolerate slavery upon the basis it had heretofore occupied, and he recognized that Illinois with its own Republican President, who had received a materially larger vote than himself and the eleven ballots of the state in the electoral college, would not be hospitable

toward a man who would show antagonism to the administration. With this personal interest in maintaining himself as a national figure, potentially at least the leader of the opposition in Congress when that opposition should have had time once more to draw together its scattered forces, was combined the appeal of consistency and patriotism. Douglas had plainly said during the campaign that he thought secession, if attempted, should be put down by armed force. Support of the administration, therefore, was both the personal and patriotic dictate of the moment. If possible, the President must be saved from the control of the extreme reform element which would make him a crusader against slavery and would commit him firmly to the idea that his mission was to correct the moral wrongs done by the continued existence of the slave system since the founding of the Constitution. As an administration Democrat, Douglas would be consistent and patriotic, and would further his own personal and political ends. It was in this direction, therefore, that he now shaped his course.

The election of Lincoln had been succeeded by the usual feeling of doubt concerning a new figure in the White House which is most keen between the choice of a President and the time of his taking office. This familiar hesitancy and question, ordinarily characteristic of the period when a nation is making its first real acquaintance with the new leader, had been deepened in the case of Lincoln by certain untoward facts. His election found him in many

ways more free from personal influences and pledges than Presidents commonly are. One result was an unusual gathering of politicians and place-seekers at Springfield where they made their clamorous demands and urged their claims upon the President-elect.[1] Lincoln was still a narrow man, untried by the exigent demands of great emergency. He was still sectional and local, uncertain how to move, lacking in personal dignity upon occasion, and to those who did not know him and who were unaware of his mighty moral power, unimpressive. Yielding to the advice of detectives, Lincoln quietly slipped into Washington *incognito*, changing a program that had been definitely set in advance and thus presumably avoiding the danger of assassination. To some observers who met him soon after his arrival, he seemed weak, vacillating and uncertain. Douglas regretted these impressions, and thought that another way of reaching Washington would have been better. He admitted that Lincoln was still local and sectional, but he recognized his capacity for growth and believed he would throw off the influences of the cliques and groups by which he was surrounded. Mrs. Douglas hastened to offer the proper social attention to Mrs. Lincoln, while Douglas himself as early as possible paid his respects to the President-elect. Douglas stated to Lincoln his own views about the posture of affairs in Washington, inveighed against the efforts of extremists on both sides to bring on war, urged that the

[1] Oberholtzer, *Abraham Lincoln*, p. 161 ff.

Constitution be amended at a national convention to be called by the President, and placed himself at the disposal of the new administration in a non-partisan way.

Lincoln seemed to be uncertain, for the crisis was such as to chill the determination of even the most resolute man. He refused to accept Douglas's suggestions, although he appreciated the spirit in which they were made, and without definitely rejecting them reserved them for consideration. Congress closed in a whirlwind of debate and recrimination, in the course of which compromise proposals of all kinds were defeated. Douglas did not stay throughout the all-night session which preceded March 4th, the date falling that year on Monday. He discussed with Lincoln up to the last moment some of the ideas to be brought forward in the inaugural address, stood close to the new President while he delivered it, and immediately afterward spoke in high terms of its content. He emphasized his friendly attitude toward the President's immediate family, and sought in every way to support and defend both the personality of the new incumbent of the first office in the land, and the ideas by which he was now animated. Lincoln was in need of aid. The radical Republican senators were not altogether pleased with the tone of the inaugural address, while the extreme Southerners sought for a basis of interpretation that would enable them to represent it as a call to war. Douglas thought that the extremes on both sides

should be avoided and that a middle course should be steered. Immediately after the inauguration day, he stepped forward as the champion of the administration in Congress, though he refrained from admitting his own personal approval and commendation of what President Lincoln had said. His views as a public man with reference to the address were set forth in a speech of March 6th.

Lincoln's address[1] had been regarded by the Southern sympathizers in the Senate as a threat of war. The truth was that in its general tone the address was probably as friendly and as moderate as the conditions of the times demanded or the platform upon which Lincoln had been elected would have permitted. This is the opinion of Lincoln's latest biographers,[2] who have written in cooler temper and with less partisanship than those who had early followed the career of the great President. Lincoln was, in fact, distinctly conciliatory in certain respects. His view of the existing situation was, from a practical standpoint, now singularly close to that of Douglas, notwithstanding that nothing had been done to bridge the chasm of theory and constitutional doctrine by which the two men were separated. They were at one in their view that the Union was perpetual and that no state upon its own mere motion could break the bond. With Douglas, too, Lincoln held that the act of secession, if seriously undertaken by any

[1] *Messages and Papers*, Vol. VI, p. 5.
[2] See, for instance, Oberholtzer, *Abraham Lincoln*, p. 182.

state or body of states, could not be indifferently regarded by the Federal government, and that such effort must be put down by force. This harmony of belief was not, as some overzealous admirers of Douglas have wished to show, the result of Douglas's influence on Lincoln. It was the outcome of a state of facts which could lead to but one conclusion among those with whom sectionalism was not a controlling idea or attachment to a peculiar institution superior to love of country. It was, too, the result of the prevailing opinion of the great Northwest and Middle West from which both Lincoln and Douglas drew their strength. Both were politicians of phenomenal immediate insight, and Lincoln was already passing to the level of statesmanship. This level Douglas himself had sometimes attained, and he was now maintaining his position with what was for him an unusual degree of steadiness. There was thus a common ground of sympathy between the two men. Lincoln, in declaring that there should be no violent attack upon any state unless such attack could not be avoided by the Federal government, did indeed tacitly but clearly indicate that an appeal to arms would be forthcoming if circumstances compelled. In this he took no stronger ground than Douglas himself in his speeches in the Southern states, when he had flatly said that secession, should it be attempted, must be put down.

It was not strange, then, that when Douglas rose in the Senate on the 6th of March, he should do so with the firm intent of defending the inaugural ad

dress. He properly pointed out that there was no ground for regarding the paper as unduly extreme. Rather it was conciliatory.[1] The President intended, it was true, to apply force, if force were demanded. Yet the tone of the address, thought Douglas, opened a door for peaceful settlement of pending controversies along legitimate lines. He even went further, and attributed to Lincoln a definite acceptance of the idea of amending the Constitution in the way which he himself had urged—a suggestion which had, at the utmost, a basis in interpretation rather than in fact. It was one of the strongest features of Douglas's endorsement of the inaugural address that he limited it entirely to those portions which dealt with the question of preserving the Union. Frankly and honestly he announced that he was still at war with Mr. Lincoln upon broad questions of party principle, although as to the preservation and continuation of the United States upon its original lines, perhaps with some amendment of the Constitution, he was in harmony with the new President and expected to support him. As to the immediate question of the policy to be pursued with reference to the Federal garrisons in Southern states, which had now become acute in the case of Fort Sumter, Douglas did not know what to say, and when pressed by secessionists could only answer that he knew nothing about what was to be done. He was in no position, therefore, to make suggestions on this subject.

[1] *Congressional Globe*, 2d Sess., 36th Cong., p. 1438.

The address was among Douglas's most effective efforts, and had a very wholesome influence. Lincoln knew its importance. He had already begun to realize the difficulties by which he was beset on all sides and was in no mind to throw himself into the arms of the zealous reformers represented by the New England group in the Senate. As a practical politician, he was able to appreciate to the full the value of such a supporter as Douglas in the upper House of Congress, even though that support were limited to the one question which above all others would test his administration—the preservation of the Union. In consultations with Douglas, he now took the leader of the Democratic opposition still further into his confidence and sought his advice about the points of actual policy which were still awaiting a settlement. He particularly asked Douglas what the latter would advise with reference to the garrisons in South Carolina, and Douglas gave him counsel based upon the immediate expediencies of the situation. Recognizing that a misstep at the opening of the administration might lead to a serious tactical defeat, he was inclined to suggest that before taking positive action, something should be attempted with a view to getting at the existing feeling in the Senate. The time was pressing and action could not be longer delayed. He determined to bring matters to a crucial test by forcing a vote that would not only develop sentiment in the upper House of Congress, but would also commit to the support of the President the

wavering members who would like to equivocate and, in case things went wrong, throw the blame upon the Executive. Lincoln from the start had intended to hold both Sumter and Pickens,[1] and if possible to keep general control of the border slave states. This was the broad generalization of the outsider, who had not yet come face to face with the real problem. As soon as he had assumed office, he found the question much more difficult and was confronted by a statement from those in charge of Sumter that 20,000 good men would be needed if the fort were to be retained. Several advisers suggested evacuation, and Lincoln himself was distressed by the swarms of hungry Republican office-seekers who, as Stanton said, filled the "grounds, halls, stairways, and closets" of the White House to such an extent as to make it hard to get out of or into the structure. Lincoln, therefore, was very glad to leave to Douglas the task of finding out how things stood.

The matter was brought to a head on the floor, apropos of a resolution offered by Douglas on the 13th of March, in which he asked for information about the forts, and inquired whether reinforcements were necessary.[2] This afforded opportunity for a discussion. Douglas felt impelled to explain why he had offered such a resolution and pointed out that the customs duties could not be, and were not being, collected in the Southern states. The

[1] Rhodes, Vol. III, p. 325.
[2] *Congressional Globe*, 2d Sess., 36th Cong., p. 1452.

question therefore arose whether the President could establish a blockade of Charleston, and in general what would be the appropriate method of enforcing the laws in the states affected by the secession movement.[1] Congress had as yet done nothing. Why should it seek in this way to hamper the President? Was it not ready to support him by bestowing proper authority and giving power to do whatever was necessary? The inquiries were resented by the Republicans. They disliked to see a Democrat thus rising to the occasion and convicting them of indifference or lukewarmness while they sat silent, unready to take the necessary action and supinely throwing upon the President the responsibility for everything that must be done. The appeal, therefore, was of no effect and Lincoln, who had meanwhile, on the 15th of March,[2] referred the matter to the Cabinet without getting any satisfactory answer, felt obliged to make up his mind alone. He sent a confidential agent to Charleston with a view to finding out whether there was any latent Federal feeling in the state,[3] and the reply which he received showed that such sentiment was almost entirely dead. The question dragged on for some days while Seward was negotiating with representatives of the Confederacy and hoping that things would work themselves into a better situa-

[1] *Congressional Globe*, 2d Sess., 36th Cong., p. 1458.
[2] Rhodes, Vol. III, p. 327.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 328.

tion. Nothing came of the discussion, and on the 4th of April Lincoln finally resolved to send troops to Sumter, notifying Governor Pickens to expect an attempt to supply the fort with provisions. The expedition at last started, arriving at Charleston on the morning of April 12th, when it was found that an attack upon Sumter had begun. The war had thus definitely opened, unless Davis and his associates should make some entirely unexpected change in their plans.

Douglas, on the whole, approved of the course that was being pursued, although during the discussion late in March he had understood that the troops were to be withdrawn from Sumter, and had publicly stated that he believed this was the better course. The subsequent two weeks, however, convinced him that his own hope of gathering support in the doubtful states and waiting for the Confederacy to attack was not based upon fact and that Lincoln had probably done about the only thing possible under the circumstances. There is no evidence that this view was changed by the capitulation of Sumter two days after the bombardment had begun. The logical conclusion of everything that he had said within the preceding months could be only that all must now unite in holding up the President's hands, and in waging a successful war.

Those who had been doubtful or hesitating, and who had embarrassed the President by their lack of courage saw at last that Douglas's position since the inauguration had been the correct one. They

hastened to support Lincoln in calling for troops and Douglas was not slow to join them with hearty concurrence in such measures as the President might deem best. He went to the White House on the 14th of April and assured Mr. Lincoln that the time for action had come. Lincoln read him the proclamation which he had drafted[1] and in which he asked for 75,000 men. Douglas recommended that the number be made 200,000, and when he left the White House he told the newspaper correspondents that the defense of Washington and the taking of active measures for the preservation of the government even to the extent of war was necessary and that he fully supported the administration. This position he now continued to sustain, laying aside the formal attitude of opposition on theoretical questions which he had adopted immediately after the inauguration, in the Senate, perhaps for the purpose of concealing to some extent just how closely he felt allied in sympathy to Lincoln. Preparations for war went on more vigorously and Douglas aided, in so far as he could, with counsel and suggestion, especially exerting his power to prevent the development of a Southern party in the North which by passive opposition to the administration, or perhaps by active sympathy with the South, might obstruct the successful prosecution of the conflict.[2] In this connection his aid was invaluable. Even in the

[1] Nicolay and Hay, Vol. IV, p. 80.
[2] Oberholtzer, *Lincoln*, p. 194.

capacity of an administration supporter, however, Douglas still sought the conservative side and urged upon the President that in protecting Washington he should, so far as possible, avoid measures which might bring the oncoming troops into conflict with the disaffected population of Baltimore and the adjacent districts.[1]

He did not, however, continue very long in the capital, for news from Illinois led him to think that he could better serve the Union in the Middle West and Southwest where his popularity was great. He started for home, therefore, with the idea of visiting the southwestern section of his state, to investigate the conditions which existed there. Lincoln gave his approbation to the scheme and Douglas left him,[2] with the distinct understanding that he was henceforward an administration man, likely to play an increasingly important part in the development of the war policy of the President. The journey to Illinois was slow and gave opportunity for some political speaking *en route*. Douglas did

[1] Johnson, *Life*, p. 478, also Forney's *Anecdotes*, Vol. I, p. 225.

[2] Nicolay and Hay, Vol. IV, pp. 82–84. Also Herndon-Weik, *Lincoln*, Vol. II, p. 249 (footnote). Henry C. Whitney wrote thus (MS. letter) Nov. 13, 1866: "Lincoln then told me of his last interview with Douglas. 'One day Douglas came rushing in,' he related, 'and said he had just got a telegraph dispatch from some friends in Illinois urging him to come out and help set things right in Egypt, and that he would go, or stay in Washington, just where I thought he could do the most good. I told him to do as he chose, but that he could probably do best in Illinois. Upon that he shook hands with me and hurried away to catch the next train. I never saw him again.'"

his utmost to convert such wavering hearers as he could to a belief in the honest purpose of the President, as well as to faith in and support of the Union.[1] He did not arrive at Springfield until near the end of the month of April and there he delivered a noteworthy address. In this he strongly vindicated the policy of the administration and the invoking of war, though with due recognition of the seriousness of the step and with foreboding admission that the struggle could be nothing short of a tremendous national calamity. Neither in this address nor in that which he shortly after delivered in Chicago, before a huge audience which loaded him with applause and praise, did he even suggest a feeling of vindictiveness or attempt to arouse factional passions. He spoke of the war as a terrible but unavoidable remedy, which must be applied with as much conservatism and as gently as the na-

[1] J. D. Cox, in *Military Reminiscences of the Civil War*, Vol. I, pp. 5-6, says of a speech delivered by Douglas at Columbus: "Stephen A. Douglas passed through Columbus . . . a few days after the surrender of Sumter, and in response to the calls of a spontaneous gathering of people, spoke to them from his bed room window in the American House. There had been no thought for any of the common surroundings of a public meeting. There were no torches, no music. A dark crowd of men filled full the dim-lit street, and called for Douglas with an earnestness of tone wholly different from the enthusiasm of common political gatherings. He came half-dressed to his window, and without any light near him, spoke solemnly to the people upon the terrible crisis which had come upon the nation. Men of all parties were there . his own followers to get some light as to their duty; the Breckinridge Democrats ready, most of them, repentantly to follow a Northern leader, now that their recent candidate was in the rebellion: the Republicans eagerly anxious to know whether so potent an influence was to

ture of the case would permit. It must be carried on with as much self-restraint and humanity as war could ever be. Only in denunciation of those who had made use of the slavery question as an excuse for the dissolution of the Union did the politician, always present in Douglas, show himself. He still believed that the secession movement was the outcome of a conspiracy and that there was no good reason for the inauguration of such a movement at the present moment. The Southern leaders, he thought, had resolved upon it, and against them he believed popular feeling should be directed. They were in fact traitors against whom only force and warlike measures would avail.

Douglas was again fully reëstablished in popular affection. His own appeals and injunctions to the people had been heeded. They had sunk their personal prejudices, their doubts about constitutional issues, in the immediate necessity of saving the

be unreservedly on the side of the country. I remember well the serious solicitude with which I listened to his opening sentences as I leaned against the railing of the State House park, trying in vain to get more than a dim outline of the man as he stood at the unlighted window. His deep sonorous voice rolled down through the darkness from above us,—an earnest, measured voice, the more solemn, the more impressive, because we could not see the speaker, and it came, too, literally as 'a voice in the night,'—the night of our country's unspeakable trial. There was no uncertainty in his tone: the Union must be preserved and the insurrection must be crushed,—he pledged his hearty support to Mr. Lincoln's administration in doing this. Other questions must stand aside till the national authority should be everywhere recognized. I do not think we greatly cheered him—it was rather a deep amen that went up from the crowd."

Union. There could be no question about Douglas's position on that point. Those who had been wavering in Illinois were carried along by the great personal force of the man and now at length gave their adherence not only to the Union policy, but to Douglas's position in reference to it. Those who had hated the man himself saw in him one who had already rendered signal service to the Union and who had proved that he could be trusted. They believed that, whatever had been his past offenses, it would be wisest to overlook them and to accept him for what he was—an earnest upholder of the policy of Lincoln with respect to the Confederacy. To Douglas himself it must have seemed the opening of a new era in his political career. For the present, probably for the future, his aspirations to the presidency must be laid aside. But that conviction had already come to him at the time of the election, and he undoubtedly admitted in his own mind that if this highest of all political preferments were ever to be open to him it must be at some far-distant day. For the present he had behind him a united state and he was in a position to make his judgments as effective in national politics as almost any man except the President himself.

But Douglas was unable either to perform the service to the country by which he might in a measure have repaired the evil wrought by his earlier ambition or to press forward into the new fields of personal achievement that were opening before him. The habit of heavy drinking which

had increased upon him had greatly impaired his constitution. Contemporaries, generalizing perhaps too broadly or hastily, said that he was killing himself with "cheap whiskey." Others assigned the serious disorders which now attacked him to the overwork of the campaign and the excitement and stress of the six months which followed it. Both influences doubtless had their part in his undoing. Douglas's personal business, moreover, was in confusion, and to political anxiety was added the fear that his own entangled financial affairs could not be set straight. He had borrowed very heavily upon his land to meet the expenses of the campaign, and was now faced with the alternative of paying what he owed or of selling his property. The combination of untoward conditions proved too much for him and early in May he was obliged to take to his bed. The sickness did not prove immediately fatal but gradually reduced his strength until on the 3d of June the end came.

The removal of Douglas at this particular juncture was properly and generally regarded as a serious blow to the Lincoln administration. Even Greeley spoke of it as a "national calamity,"[1] and others though less positive in their assertions held the same view. The Northern Democratic party had become little more than a personal conservative group led by Douglas and quite generally recognizing the necessity of a reconstruction of its

[1] New York *Tribune*, June 1, 1860, quoted by Rhodes, Vol. III, p. 414.

principles to suit the altered Federal conditions which were near at hand. Entirely apart from any share in the conduct of the war, Douglas's most conspicuous service to the country would probably have been the development of Democratic ideas in such a way as to avoid too great a breach with the past and their adjustment to the new problems which were presenting themselves. Death thus left the party without a head, and without a controlling mind sufficiently identified with its inner history, or sufficiently forceful in its grasp of measures and its knowledge of men, to compel discipline. While Lincoln, therefore, lost a valuable coadjutor and the country an important factor in the work of sustaining national unity, the Democratic organization, thoroughly broken as it was by the war, was deprived of the man who above all others would have been competent and courageous in bringing about its reëstablishment. There was thus lacking at a crucial moment the check upon national legislation which is afforded by a wise and well managed minority. It is probable that, had he lived, Douglas's career would have been as significant in later American history as it was in the critical decade of 1850–1860.

Yet, in another sense Douglas's end was not too early to permit the rounding out of a self-consistent and completed career. Douglas was distinctly characteristic of the phase of American development and civilization which existed between 1830, when President Jackson and his followers came into

full control of the national power, and 1860, when the Civil War at last became inevitable. Both periods were revolutionary; they were not simply times of transition. Jackson's incoming marked the passing of a generation of statesmen who grew out of the Revolution, and the advent of a crude, energetic, self-reliant race, much less cultivated, and essentially vulgar, who then took possession of the government and inaugurated a régime which lasted until 1861. The influence of this new element in American politics was manifest throughout the administration of Jackson; it culminated in the acquisition of Texas and the war with Mexico; and developed to a finality in the long anti-slavery struggle between 1848 and 1861, leading directly to the new revolution,—for it was nothing else,—which then broke out. At least four phases of political life were represented in that period. One was the New England phase, of which Webster, Everett, Winthrop, and Charles Sumner were the famous exponents. A second was that of New York and the Central states, in which Marcy, Buchanan, and Seward were excellent types, retaining strongly, as they did, the habits both of thought and action of the earlier post-revolutionary period, although distinctly affected by the Jacksonian inroad. The old pro-slavery party, of which Calhoun, Toombs, Stevens and Jefferson Davis were good representatives, constituted a third element. Finally, there was the new, frontier, free state Northwest ingredient, typified by both Douglas and Lin-

coln, though in materially different ways. The Northwestern element, with Douglas for spokesman, sought to gain possession of the administration, as Jackson had attempted and succeeded before them. They failed in the effort, and then came the deluge. It was of this faction that Douglas was probably the best exponent. He was representative of all their virtues and all their vices,—their energy, their individuality, their self-assertion, their coarseness, their semi-education and their self-confidence. Every one of these elements of character was reproduced in Douglas;—more fully exemplified in him than in any other public man then thrown to the front.

The passing of Douglas had been anticipated by his friends and should have been expected by the country. Although but little past his forty-eighth birthday, he was prematurely gray and worn. He had sunk rapidly in health since the presidential contest, but the country, accustomed to the remarkable energy and robustness which he had shown for years past, did not note the loss of his old strength. Yet it had been with evident effort that he had sustained the fatigues and excitements of the winter, and the restoration of his popularity afforded him but a passing exhilaration. The suddenness of his decease in what should have been his strong prime was almost spectacular. In many minds the efforts of the man during the last year of his life had amply redeemed the mistakes of the past, and the news that he was gone occasioned a general ex-

pression of sorrow which found its external manifestation in a solemn and elaborate farewell. An impressive *cortège* bore him to his appointed place by the shore of Lake Michigan, and the flattery that could not "soothe the dull cold ear of death" was not withheld. Men of all parties and from all portions of the country bore their testimony to the power of the departed personality, and to the loss that had been suffered in the removal of a potent force for the restoration of tolerable conditions throughout the Union. There sprang up a Douglas myth,—ignoring, like many others, the most salient points in the hero's career,—which has survived to the present day. It adds nothing to the accuracy of popular conceptions of American history that the legend has been paralleled by another which places Douglas side by side in purpose and in effort with the Southern leaders—the pro-slavery statesmen who had done their utmost to balk his life's ambition.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ADAMS, JOHN QUINCY. Memoirs edited by Charles Francis Adams, 1874–1877.

BENTON, THOMAS H. Thirty Years' View of the United States Senate, 1854–1856.

BROWN, W. G. Stephen Arnold Douglas, 1902.

CARR, CLARK E. Stephen A. Douglas, 1909.

CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE, 1840–1860.

COX, J. D. Military Reminiscences of the Civil War, 1900.

CUTTS, J. MADISON. Constitutional and Party Questions, 1866.

DAVIDSON, ALEXANDER and STUVÉ, BERNARD. A complete History of Illinois, 1884.

DIXON, S. B. True History of the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise, 1899.

DODD, WILLIAM E. Jefferson Davis, 1907.

FORD, THOMAS. History of Illinois, 1851.

FLINT, HENRY M. Stephen A. Douglas, 1860.

FORNEY, JOHN W. Anecdotes of Public Men, 1873.

GARDNER, WILLIAM. Life of Stephen A. Douglas, 1905.

GARRISON, W. P. and F. J. Life of Garrison, 1904.

HALSTEAD, MURAT. Caucuses of 1860, 1860.

HERNDON, W. H. and WEIK, J. W. Abraham Lincoln, 1892.

JOHNSON, ALLEN. Stephen A. Douglas, 1908.

LINN, W. A. Story of the Mormons, 1902.

MESSAGES AND PAPERS of the Presidents of the United States.

MORSE, J. T. Abraham Lincoln, 1893.

MOSES, JOHN. Illinois Historical and Statistical, 1889–1892.

NICOLAY, JOHN G. and JOHN HAY. Abraham Lincoln, A History, 1890.

OBERHOLTZER, ELLIS P. Abraham Lincoln, 1904.

OGDEN, ROLLO. Life and Letters of Edwin Lawrence Godkin, 1907.

POLITICAL DEBATES between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas, 1860.

RAY, P. O. Repeal of the Missouri Compromise, 1909.

RHODES, JAMES FORD. History of the United States, 1850–1860 (3 volumes), 1893.

RUSSELL, WILLIAM HOWARD. My Diary North and South, 1863.

SCAMMON, F. YOUNG. Illinois Supreme Court Reports, 1840–1843.

SCHURZ, CARL. Reminiscences, 1907.

SENATE DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS, 1840–1860.

SHEAHAN, JAMES W. Stephen A. Douglas, 1860.

SHERMAN, JOHN. Recollections of Forty Years, 1895.

SPRING, LEVERETT W. Kansas, 1885.

STANWOOD, EDWARD. History of the Presidency, 1898.

———— American Tariff Controversies, 1903.

STOREY, MOORFIELD. Charles Sumner, 1900.

TREATIES IN FORCE, 1899.

UNITED STATES STATUES AT LARGE.

VILLARD, HENRY. Memoirs, 1904.

WILSON, HENRY. Rise and Fall of the Slave Power, 1872–1877.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BIOGRAPHIES

SEVERAL lives of Douglas have been written, two or more of them comparatively recently. Probably the most valuable biography is that of Sheahan which was prepared not long before Douglas's death for political circulation. The volume is of especial use because it contains long extracts from Douglas's more important speeches as well as other documents supplied by Mr. Douglas himself, while the facts were undoubtedly obtained, wherever necessary, from the same source.

The most scholarly life of Douglas is that of Allen Johnson (published by the Macmillan Company, New York, 1908, about 503 pages). This work is a complete survey of Douglas's life upon a background of contemporary history and in its preparation most of the available sources have been consulted. The scanty papers and autobiographical material in unpublished form have also been utilized and are referred to by Mr. Johnson, although they do not add materially to the facts as known from other sources.

Clark E. Carr's "Stephen A. Douglas: His Life, Public Services, Speeches and Patriotism" (Chicago, A. C. McClurg & Co., 1909, about 293 pages) is the latest of the Douglas biographies, but is very largely occupied with appendices which give speeches and other documentary matter available elsewhere. This work is to a great extent a personal appraisal rather than a formal biography.

Henry Martyn Flint's Life (Derby & Jackson, New York, 1860, about 187 pages) is a contemporary biography partly composed of extracts from speeches but inferior to that of Sheahan.

William Garrott Brown's "Life of Douglas" is a short biographico-critical essay, very friendly to Douglas and interestingly written.

William Gardner's "Life of Stephen A. Douglas" (Boston, Roxburgh Press, 1905, about 239 pages) has some value.

CONTEMPORARY BIOGRAPHY

Much help may be obtained in the study of Douglas's career from an examination of contemporary biography. Of such biographies those in the American Statesmen Series have distinct value, especially the lives of Charles Sumner, Cass, Lincoln and others. The American Crisis Biographies (George W. Jacobs & Co., Philadelphia) supply material that is not available in the American Statesmen Series with reference to various figures conspicuous during the period just before the Civil War. Special use has been made in this volume of Oberholtzer's "Abraham Lincoln," William E. Dodd's "Jefferson Davis," and one or two others. Nicolay and Hay's "Abraham Lincoln: A History," Volumes I, II and III (New York, The Century Co., 1890), is authoritative in tracing the later history of Douglas's life and the relations between him and President Lincoln.

MEMOIRS AND AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

Of the memoirs and autobiographies relating to the period just prior to the Civil War, Henry Villard's "Memoirs" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1904) furnishes interesting personal observations concerning the latter part of Douglas's career, while Carl Schurz's "Reminiscences" (The McClure Co., 1907) is valuable in the same way. Ogden's "Life and Letters of Godkin" throws some light upon passages of Douglas's career in the Senate. Among the autobiographical works which are incidentally useful concerning portions of Douglas's political life, those of Hoar ("Autobiography"), Benton ("Thirty Years' View of the United States Senate"), Sherman ("Recollections"), and a few others are of most use. J. Q. Adams' "Memoirs" furnish caustic and interesting comment upon Douglas's work in the House. William Howard Russell's "My Diary North and South" (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1863) affords some personal impressions of Douglas and

a general view of conditions at the opening of the Civil War that are of value.

HISTORIES

Rhodes's "History of the United States," Volumes I, II and III (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1893), is of very great value in placing Douglas in his relation to the public questions of the whole period 1850–1861. Rhodes's work is of special use because of the extensive material drawn from contemporary newspapers, etc., of which he has availed himself in the preparation of the volumes. Schouler's "History of the United States," Vols. IV and V, is also of use in connection with the life of Douglas. For local historical material referring primarily to conditions in Illinois, Ford's "History of Illinois" and Davidson and Stuve's "History of Illinois" are the most valuable sources.

DISCUSSIONS OF SLAVERY

The extensive literature of slavery contains much material bearing upon Douglas and Douglas's political doctrines, but a great deal of it so biased and partisan in statement or method as to render it of little use. Among the works that are of some service in connection with Douglas are Wilson's "Rise and Fall of the Slave Power."

DISCUSSIONS OF CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

Cutts's "Constitutional and Party Questions" (New York, D. Appleton & Co., 1886) gives the views of Douglas on some of the most important public issues in whose discussion he had shared as taken down by Mr. J. Madison Cutts in 1859 from Douglas's own direct dictation. The book may be accepted as an accurate analysis of Douglas's ideas on the issues dealt with.

SPEECHES AND DOCUMENTS

The *Congressional Globe* throughout Douglas's legislative career in Congress is of course the ultimate authority for all statements about action on the floor, speeches on public questions, etc. The

House and Senate documents and committee reports also contain valuable material—much of it by Douglas's own hand.

Douglas's debates with Lincoln during the Illinois campaign of 1858 are given in satisfactory form in "The Political Debates Between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas" (Columbus, Follett, Foster & Co., 1860).

POLITICAL HISTORY

Stanwood's "History of the Presidency" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Cambridge, 1898) furnishes a compact review of the various presidential contests in which Douglas shared, including the figures for both popular and electoral votes. Halstead's "Caucuses of 1860—A History of the National Political Convention of the Current Presidential Campaign" (Columbus, Follett, Foster & Co., 1860) affords a fairly complete description of the political conventions in the year 1860.

CONTEMPORARY PUBLICATIONS

The files of the New York *Tribune* and of the Washington newspapers are the most useful sources of contemporary material, particularly for the decade 1850–1860. The local Illinois newspapers frequently referred to only occasionally contain material that is of value.

INDEX

ABOLITION, movement in Illinois, 103; growth of sentiment for, 170; attacked by Douglas, 170; methods of propaganda, 210.

Adams, C. F., view of Douglas's maiden speech, 73–74; criticism of Douglas's speech on contested seats, 77–78; comment on later activities of Douglas, 79; criticism on Douglas's annexation speech, 83; controversy with Douglas about Texas boundary, 94–95.

"American" policy, genesis of, 170; tested by Clayton Bulwer question, 182.

Appeal of Independent Democrats prepared, 199.

Arnold, Martha, ancestress of Douglas, 13.

BALTIMORE, convention of 1852, 176; Pierce nominated at, 177.

Bates, Edward, encourages Douglas in legal study, 17.

Bell, John, nominated for presidency, 319.

Bennett, John C., employed by Mormons, 55; work for sect, 59.

Benton, Thomas H., thinks Calhoun's secession views absurd, 155; desires separate treatment of California question, 158; opposes omnibus measure, 159.

Bigler, Senator, controversy with Douglas on Lecompton plan, 248; hostile demonstration in Chicago, 250.

Black, Attorney-General, replies to Douglas's article in *Harper's*, 303.

Brandon, Douglas enters academy at, 13; early study of law at, 16.

Breckinridge, John C., nominated for presidency, 317.

Breese, Sidney, senatorial ambitions of, 50; retired from Senate, 104; cold toward Illinois Central plan, 114; reports railroad bills, 114.

Broderick, Senator, position in California, 303.

Brooks, Preston S., assault on Sumner, 234.

Brooks, S. S., description of Douglas, 21; editor Jacksonville *News*, 21; coalition with Douglas, 22; aids in developing convention system, 27; aid in congressional nomination, 37.

Brown, Senator, attacks Freeport Doctrine, 296.

Brown, John, early history, 304; attacks Harper's Ferry, 304; raid of, investigated by Congress, 305; effect of raid, 306.

Buchanan, James, candidate for presidency, 187; nominated for presidency, 1856, 220; view of slavery, 221; vote

for, 223; sends Lecompton constitution to Congress, 251; attacks Douglas in Illinois, 259; anti-Douglas efforts in Illinois campaign unfruitful, 289; attacks Douglas in national campaign, 320.

CALHOUN, JOHN, in legislature with Douglas, 31.
Calhoun, John C., relation to Douglas, 129; last service of, 149; answers Clay, 154.
California, relation of to Oregon question, 101; need for action regarding, 148; special committee on, 158; territorial question in, 151; relation to Monroe Doctrine, 181.
Carlin, Governor, issues warrant for arrest of Joseph H. Smith, 61.
Carr, C. E., views on Kansas-Nebraska act, 207.
Cass, Lewis, vote for, 105; relation to Clayton-Bulwer treaty, 182; candidate for presidency, 187.
Catholic Church, attitude of Know-Nothings toward, 210.
Charleston convention, assembles, 309; character of, 310; work of, 311 ff.; disintegrates, 313; adjourns, 313.
Chase, S. P., relation to Douglas, 129; aids in preparing protest against Nebraska bill, 199; weak reply to Douglas, 200; seeks to amend Nebraska bill, 201.
Chicago, real estate bought by Douglas, 113; brought into railroad scheme, 113; relation to proposed lines, 114; ovation to Douglas, 118.
Clay, H., relation to Douglas, 129; last service of, 149; offers territorial compromise, 153; speaks for compromise, 153; answered by Calhoun, 154; favors "omnibus" measure, 159; reports Omnibus Bill, 159; plan on territories adopted, 162; indebted to Douglas, 162.
Clayton, attacked by Douglas, 183; answers Douglas, 184; seeks to amend Nebraska bill, 202.
Clayton-Bulwer treaty, contest over, 181.
Cleveland, Douglas's illness at, 17.
Cobb, Howell, elected Speaker, 152.
Collamer, makes minority report on Kansas, 251.
Colorado, bill to organize, 330.
Compromise of 1850, pushed forward, 170.
Constitution, Douglas's injunction of obedience to, 12.
Constitutional Union party, nominations of for presidency, 319.
Convention system, Douglas's interest in, 28.
Cuba, Douglas's plan to acquire, 173; Douglas's visit to, 293; position of Douglas on annexation, 295; bill to purchase, 295; discussion deferred, 296.
Cushing, Caleb, chairman of Charleston convention, 311; on Utah question, 161; aids Douglas on Nebraska bill, 196.

DAVIS, JEFFERSON, attacks

Douglas on Freeport Doctrine, 298; on John Brown investigating committee, 305; in control of reactionary group at Charleston convention, 311; resolutions of endorsed, 312; hampers Douglas in Senate, 314; resolutions adopted in Senate, 315; regrets secession, 326.
Debates, arranged between Lincoln and Douglas, 264 ff.
Democratic party, attitude on Texas, 81; relation to slavery, 85–86; platform of on Texas question, 91.
Divorce, question in Illinois legislature, 31; Douglas's attitude on, 32.
Dixon, Senator, amends Nebraska bill, 194.
Douglas, Stephen A., father of Stephen Arnold Douglas, 13; career, 13.
Douglas, Stephen Arnold, "last words," 11; early family history, 12 ff.; authorities for life of, 12 n.; birth, 13; work at farm labor, 13; desire for education, 14; drift to political discussion, 15–16; journey westward, 16; arrival in Illinois, 18; stay at Jacksonville, '18; journey to Winchester, 19; begins teaching, 20; studies law, 20; admitted to bar, 21; alliance with S. S. Brooks, 22; early political adventures, 23; favorably received, 24; drafts bill for choice of states attorneys, 25; elected states attorney, 25; work as prosecutor, 26; interest in convention system, 27; debates with Hardin, 28; consolidates convention system, 28; use of whiskey, 29; enters legislature, 30; work on divorce question, 32; advocates internal improvements, 32; appointed register of Land Office, 34; canvass of Illinois, 36; nominated for Congress, 37; defeated, 38; returns to practice of law, 39; controversy with Lincoln, 40; attacks Whig cause before Supreme Court, 40; work for Van Buren, 41; appointed Secretary of State, 40; member of Supreme Court, 42–44; assigned to fifth district as judge, 45; work on bench, 46; judicial associates, 47; relations with notable men, 48; judicial methods of, 49; effort to enter United States Senate, 50; desire for congressional nomination, 50; nomination, 51; election, 52; experience with Mormons, 53; friendly to Mormons as judge, 54; negotiations with J. C. Bennett, 55; coöperates with Snyder, 55; aids Mormons in getting charter, 55–56; assigned to Mormon district, 57; gives Mormons judicial recognition, 58; saves Joseph H. Smith, 58; important decision in Mormon case, 59; seeks to conciliate Mormons, 62–64; criticized by Ford, 64; moves with militia against Mormons, 65; goes as envoy to Nauvoo, 65; urges Mormons to leave Illinois, 66; speaks for Mor-

mons in Congress, 67; turns against Mormons, 67; political treatment of Mormons, 68–69; entry into Congress, 70–71; looks for chance to speak, 71; supports Jackson, 72; work on committee on elections, 76–77; drafts majority report on contested seats, 77; recognizes need of special local appropriations, 78–79; does party drudgery, 79; attitude toward Polk, 80; convivial habits, 80; position on Texas, 81; accepts leadership of Polk, 81; urges annexation of Texas, 82; attack on New England men, 83; supported by Southern men, 84; gains no reputation in first Texas controversy, 84; attitude toward slavery, 85–86; practical political instincts, 86; sees good side of slavery, 86 ff.; three periods in relation to slavery, 89; influence of marriage on, 89 ff.; calls for admission of Texas, 91; vindicates Polk, 92; represents administration, 92; speech against Mexico, 92–94; controversy with Adams about Texas boundary, 94–95; draws closer to Polk, 95–96; enters Senate, 96; speaks for Ten Regiments Bill, 97; attacks treaty with Mexico, 97; views on Oregon question, 98; attacks England, 98; opposition to Polk, 99–100; driven to accept compromise, 101; circumstances surrounding election to Senate, 102–103; relation to anti-slavery movement, 104; apologizes to Polk, 104; opponents' attack on, 105; vote of lack of confidence in, 106; disregarded by Douglas, 106; recovery of strength, 107; attitude on Federal aid to internal improvements, 108–109; general policy, 110; urges grant of public lands for railroad building, 112; views on Illinois Central, 112; buys Chicago real estate, 113; urges land subsidy for Illinois Central, 114; his plan defeated, 114; seeks alliance with Mobile railroad, 115; arranges for votes, 115; drafts new bill, 116; warns Holbrook, 117; traffics for railroad votes, 117; forces bill through Congress, 118; profits from railroad deal, 119; committed to other railroad schemes, 119; votes for such schemes, 120; attitude on Pacific roads, 121; speaks in favor of, 121; inconsistency on railroads, 124; advocates systematic river and harbor policy, 124; peculiar proposal, 124–125; strange record on rivers and harbors, 125–126; ideas on reciprocity, 126; favors cut in tariff, 126; advanced views, 127; importance of senatorial career, 128; character of his problems, 129; attitude toward public questions, 130; personal traits, 131; physical appearance, 132; vividness of personality, 133; lack of training, 134; family life, 137; views of Southerners regarding, 139;

develops a type of oratory, 140; good relations with colleagues, 141; innocent of Brooks' attack on Sumner, 142–143; explanation of attack, 143; lack of animosity toward politicians, 144; prosperous, 145; endows Chicago University, 145; free from personal corruption, 146; careless in business, 146; extravagant outlays, 147; on California, 153; attacks Webster, 157; on slavery in California, 157; reports territorial bills, 158; omitted from select committee on California, 158; opposes omnibus measure, 159; aids Clay, 162; credited for Omnibus Bill, 163; assailed in Illinois, 164; regains prestige in Chicago, 165; presidential ambitions, 166; growth in national strength, 167; habits of, 168; affects indifference to presidency, 169; attacks Abolition movement, 170; embarks on "American policy," 171; attempts to discredit Webster, 172; relation to Kossuth, 173; advocates annexation of Cuba, 174; political tactics of, 175; defeated at Baltimore convention, 177; accepts defeat gracefully, 178; renews contest for Senate, 179; on Clayton-Bulwer treaty, 182; attacks Clayton, 183; visits Europe, 185; suspected by South, 188–189; frames Nebraska bill, 189; attitude to Missouri Compromise, 190; favors Dixon amendment, 194; accepts Dixon amendment, 195; gets aid of Pierce and Davis, 197; attacks the "appeal," 199; amends Nebraska bill, 201; unpopularity resulting from Nebraska bill, 203; hooted at Chicago meeting, 204; how affected by Kansas-Nebraska act, 206; tour through Illinois, 209; attitude toward Know-Nothing party, 211; contest with Lincoln in 1854, 213; partial failure in elections, 214; fully committed to slavery cause, 216; attitude toward Republicans, 217; loses nomination for presidency, 1856, 220; pledges himself to Buchanan, 222; recognizes real import of slavery, 223; difficult position in Congress, 225; reports on Kansas constitution, 230; theory of popular sovereignty, 231; debate with Seward and Sumner, 233; attitude toward Dred Scott Decision, 239; attitude on Lecompton convention, 243; breach with Buchanan, 245; attacks Lecompton plan, 246; favors revival of Toombs bill, 247; discussion with Mason and Bigler, 248; speaks against Lecompton plan, 252; position in Illinois, 258; attacked at home by Buchanan, 259; enters senatorial contest with Lincoln, 260; maps out Illinois campaign, 262; accepts challenge of Lincoln to debates, 263; debate with Lincoln at Ottawa, 265 ff.; quotes "Springfield resolu-

tions," 268–269; debate at Freeport, 271; views on admission of Kansas, 273; on Supreme Court, 274; Freeport Doctrine, 274–275; on "Springfield resolutions," 275; third debate at Jonesboro, 276; interpretation of Republican movement, 277; view of Dred Scott case, 277; on Republican attitude toward slavery, 279; fourth debate at Charleston, 280; on Toombs bill, 281; attack on Trumbull, 281; fifth debate at Galesburgh, 282; reviews Nebraska bill, 282; charges Republican sectionalism, 283; sixth debate at Quincy, 283; insists on slavery as a local issue, 284; seventh debate at Alton, 284; constitutional attack on Lincoln, 285; considers slavery secondary issue, 287; gains advantage of Lincoln, 288; victory inconclusive, 289; position unsatisfactory, 291; falls back on personal following, 292; South hostile, 292; visits Cuba, 293; ostracized in Senate, 294; deposed from committee chairmanship, 294; defends Freeport Doctrine in Senate, 297–298; considers Freeport Doctrine crucial, 299; describes position in *Harper's*, 300; answered by Lincoln, 301; views on John Brown raid, 305; logical candidate of Democrats in 1860, 307; states slavery position, 307; supported by North and West, 308; dominates Union Democrats at Charleston convention, 311; defends position at Charleston convention, 314; recognizes strength of Lincoln, 316; nominated for presidency, 317; letter of acceptance, 318; instructions of as to campaign of 1860, 320; takes stump in person, 321; Southern trip, 321; repudiates secession, 322; reckless habits of, 323; views on Lincoln's election, 324; supports Lincoln, 325; new attitude toward Southerners, 330; attitude on territorial question, 331; isolated, 333; becomes administration Democrat, 334; discusses policies with Lincoln, 336; praises Lincoln's inaugural, 337; approves Lincoln's policy, 343; approves call for troops, 344; supports administration at Springfield, 346; prestige reestablished, 347; last illness and death, 349; effect of removal, 350–353.

Douglas, Mrs. (Miss Martin), characteristics of, 137.

Douglas, Mrs. (Miss Cutts), characteristics of, 137.

Dred Scott Decision reviewed, 237.

Duncan, Joseph, governor of Illinois, 25; calls special session of legislature, 35.

Dunn bill on Kansas, passed by House, 236.

Elections, committee on, Douglas appointed to, 76; drafts report of, 77.

Everett, Senator, nominated for vice-presidency, 319.

Field, superseded as Secretary of State by Douglas, 41.
Fillmore, Millard, nomination of weakens Frémont, 222; vote for, 223.
Fisk, Sarah, mother of S. A. Douglas, 13.
Ford, Thomas, on Illinois political methods, 29; criticizes Mormon charter, 57; estimate of Mormons, 59; warrant for Smith, 62; elected governor of Illinois, 63; criticism of Douglas, 64; thinks Douglas unprincipled, 68.
Foreign policy—see "American policy."
Forney, John W., personal view of Douglas, 132.
Freeport Doctrine, elucidated, 274; attacked by Senator Brown, 296; criticized by Davis, 298; defended by Douglas, 297–298.
Frémont, J. C., nominated by Republicans, 222; vote for, 223.
Fugitive Slave Law, passed, 162; feeling in Massachusetts toward, 169.

Garrison, W. L., burns Constitution, 210.
Giddings, Joshua R., aids in protest against Nebraska bill, 199.
Godkin, E. L., on Douglas's personality, 135; view of Douglas's chance of reëlection as senator, 255.
Granger, G., connection with Douglas, 15.
Great Britain, attacked by Douglas on Oregon question, 98.
Great Lakes, relation to Illinois Central scheme, 114; to be connected with Gulf, 117.
Greeley, H., relation to Douglas, 144; view of Douglas's death, 349.
Green, Senator, reports Kansas bill, 251; plan for admission of Kansas adopted, 253.
Grimes, J. W., chosen governor of Iowa, 215.
Gwin, Senator, contest with Broderick in California, 303.

Hancock County, Mormons in, 53 ff. (see Mormons); number of Mormons in, 59.
Hardin, J. J., defeated by Douglas for states attorneyship, 25; debates with Douglas, 28; elected to legislature, 29; before Supreme Court, 47; commands anti-Mormon troops, 65; sends Douglas as envoy to Mormons, 65.
Harper's Monthly, Douglas's defense in, 300; attracts little popular attention, 301.
Hoge, James P., Democratic candidate for congressman in Mormon district, 62; on power of Mormon courts, 62; supported by Mormons, 63; elected, 63.
Holbrook, scheme of, for railroads, 111; defeated in plans, 116; intrigue with Illinois legislature, 116;

warned by Douglas, 116; withdraws from contest, 117.

ILLINOIS, Douglas's arrival in, 18; early slavery in, 87; politics in transition, 102–103; growth of anti-slavery feeling, 103; manipulation of congressional districts in, 104; legislature shows want of confidence in Douglas, 107; plan for railroads in, 110–114.

Illinois Central Railroad, plan for, 112–114; scheme defeated, 114; provided for in new bill, 116; relation to other roads, 117; bill to aid passed, 118; favors to Douglas, 119.

Internal Improvements, question in Illinois legislature, 30; scheme adopted for Illinois, 33; Douglas's view of Federal aid for, 108; scheme of railroad building, 111; develops into Illinois Central plan, 112.

JACKSON, ANDREW, Douglas's early interest in, 15; bill to relieve, in Congress, 71; Douglas's eulogy on, 73; visited by Douglas, 74; endorses Douglas, 75.

Jacksonville, Douglas's stay in, 18.

Jenkins, A. M., lieutenant-governor of Illinois, 25.

Johnson, nominated to vice-presidency, 318.

Judiciary Committee, Douglas appointed to, 81.

KANE COUNTY, convention in, and "Springfield resolutions," 272.

Kansas, proposal to organize, 197; colonization of, 226; Reeder named governor, 227; controlled by Missourians, 228; report by Douglas on, 230; bill to admit passed in Senate, 235; adopts Lecompton constitution, 250.

Kansas-Nebraska Act (see "Nebraska"), effect of, 226; Douglas's course on, defended in *Harper's Monthly*, 300.

Kansas-Nebraska issue, relation to Oregon question, 101.

Keitt, relation to attack on Sumner, 143.

King, nominated for vice-presidency at Baltimore, 177.

Know-Nothings, origin of, 209; later history of, 218.

Kossuth, issue raised by, 172.

LAMBORN, JOSIAH, debate with Douglas, 24.

Land Office, Douglas's work in, 34.

Lane, nominated for vice-presidency, 318.

Lanphier, C. H., responsible for "Springfield resolutions," 275.

Lecompton convention, 241; constitution adopted by, 242; effect of on country, 242; attacked by Douglas, 246; constitution of adopted, 250; constitution sent to Congress, 251; plan adopted in Senate, 254.

Lee, R. E., captures John Brown, 304.

Lincoln, Abraham, in legislature with Douglas, 31; early

debate with Douglas, 40; before Supreme Court, 48; description of Douglas, 79; compared with Douglas, 139; employed to sue Douglas, 146; reëntry into politics, 212; speaks against Douglas, 213; style of argument, 214; accepts nomination for senatorship against Douglas, 260; debate with Douglas at Ottawa, 265 ff.; attacks "Springfield resolutions," 269; debate at Freeport, 270; views on Fugitive Slave Law, 271; on Kansas, 271; attacks "Springfield resolutions," 272; third debate at Jonesboro, 276; on doctrines of slavery, 278; fourth debate at Charleston, 280; repudiates negro equality, 280; on Toombs bill, 280; opposes negro citizenship, 282; fifth debate at Galesburgh, 282; repudiates sectionalism, 283; sixth debate at Quincy, 283; positively attacks slavery, 284; seventh debate at Alton, 284; constitutional argument, 286; defeated by Douglas, 286; contest with Douglas in Ohio, 302; on John Brown raid, 306; unanimously nominated for presidency, 316; election of, 324; feared by Southerners, 326; position after election, 334; reaches Washington *incognito*, 335; uncertain as to policy, 336; tone of inaugural, 336; intent to hold Southern forts, 341; asks Cabinet for advice, 342; calls for troops, 344; approves Douglas's trip to Illinois, 346.

Linn, view of Mormon charters, 60; attitude toward Douglas's Mormon decision, 61.

Little, Senator, relation to Mormons, 55.

Marcy, W. L., candidate for presidency, 187.

Martin, Miss Martha Denny, marriage to Douglas, 87–88; inherits slaves, 88.

Mason, Senator, on territorial issue, 156; controversy with Douglas on Lecompton plan, 248.

McConnell, Murray, aids Douglas in law, 20.

Mexico, relations with United States about Texas, 91; war with approved by Douglas, 93–94; driven to peace, 97.

Middlebury, Douglas's work in, 14.

Middle West—see Northwest.

Missouri, effort of to control Kansas, 227; influence in Kansas elections, 228.

Missouri Compromise, Douglas's desire for extension of, 82; Douglas's view of, 189–190; reason for attacking, 191; proposal to "supersede," 197.

Monroe Doctrine, becomes an issue, 181.

Mormons, Douglas's experience with, 53; Douglas sympathetic with cause of, 54; settled at Nauvoo, 54; early political policy, 54; attempt to get charter, 55; negotiations with Douglas, 55; charter granted, 55–56;

criticized by Ford, 57; growth of sect, 59–60; crimes attributed to, 60; push views before courts, 61; political policy of, 62–64; hostility toward, 64; growth of sect, 64–65; militia ordered to move against, 65; urged to leave Illinois, 66; agree to go, 66; later relations with Douglas, 67–69.
Morse, view of Douglas, 129 *et seq.*
Mosquito Coast, discussion on, 181.

NATIVE AMERICANS—see Know-Nothings.
Nauvoo Legion, established, 56.
Nebraska, early history of, 189; bill to organize framed, 189; bill popular in South, 193; Dixon amendment to, 193; Sumner amendment to, 194; Kansas to be separated from, 197; bill further amended, 201; bill passed, 203; government in, 226.
New Mexico, relation of to Oregon question, 101; territorial question in, 187; bill to organize, 330.
North, demands of on slavery question, 150; attitude as to California and New Mexico, 151; supports Douglas in 1860, 308.
Northwest, relation to Douglas's ambition, 167; effort to get Douglas votes in, 175; fails to aid Douglas, 179.

OREGON, Douglas's view of question, 98; Douglas's first measure regarding, 99; Polk's view of, 98–99; question shelved, 100; slavery issue, 100; compromise proposal, 101.

PACIFIC railroads, supported by Douglas, 121; bill for, 299.
Peoria, debate between Douglas and Lincoln at in 1854, 214.
Pierce, Franklin, nominated for presidency at Baltimore, 176; position on Nebraska bill, 196; in convention of 1856, 220; messages on Kansas, 229.
Polk, Judge, discharges Jos. H. Smith, 62.
Polk, President, Douglas's attitude toward nomination, 80; eulogizes nominee, 80; attitude toward Texas, 82; announces war with Mexico, 92; overtures to Douglas, 95; gives view of Mexican situation, 95–96; attacked by Douglas, 97; proposed settlement with Oregon, 99; proposes Oregon compromise measure, 101; apologized to by Douglas, 104.
Presidency, sought by Douglas from 1850 on, 166; Douglas's affected indifference to, 170; campaign of Douglas for nomination in 1852, 175; Pierce nominated for, 177; struggle for in 1854, 187; nomination of Buchanan for, 220; Lincoln nominated for in 1860, 316; Douglas nominated for in 1860, 317.

RECIPROCITY, with Canada urged by Douglas, 126.
Reeder, E., named governor of

Kansas, 227; policy of, 227–228; returns East, 229.
Republican party, origin of, 211; recognized, 217; nominates Frémont, 222; nominates Lincoln, 316; elects Lincoln, 324; growth of power in Congress, 330; in Senate displeased at prominence of Douglas, 342.
Rivers and Harbors, appropriation plan suggested by Douglas, 125.
Russell, W. H., on Douglas's personality, 136.

Schurz, Carl, on Douglas's personality, 134; spectator at Lincoln-Douglas debate, 265; view of Lincoln, 267.
Secession, repudiated by Douglas, 322; beginning of, 325; becomes general, 331.
Seward, Senator, relation to Douglas, 129; offers substitute bill on Kansas, 230; debate with Douglas, 233.
Sheahan, J., biographer of Douglas, 12, 13.
Shields, James, in legislature with Douglas, 31; aids Douglas in Illinois Central scheme, 115.
Slavery, question raised by Douglas in connection with Texas, 82 ff.; pushed to the front by Southerners, 84; question of, forced on Douglas, 85; Douglas's disposition toward, 85–87; effect of marriage of Douglas on his relation to, 88; in relation to Oregon, 99–100; reopened in Nebraska bill, 190.
Slidell, Senator, relation to attack on Sumner, 143; supersedes Douglas, 295.
Smith, Gerrit, aids in protest against Nebraska bill, 199.
Smith, Joseph H., head of Mormons, 57 (see Mormons); arrested, 59; praises Douglas, 59; surrenders himself, 61; discharged, 62; candidate for presidency, 64.
Soulé, territorial plan of adopted, 160.
South, urgent for slavery discussion in connection with Texas, 84; demands of in slavery question, 150; attitude as to California and New Mexico, 151; suspects Douglas, 187; peculiar economic status of, 192; approves Nebraska bill, 193.
Southerners, view of Douglas, 139; charge North with bad faith on Fugitive Slave Law, 170.
Springfield, Douglas's second law practice in, 39; debate between Douglas and Lincoln at, in 1854, 213.
St. Louis, Douglas's early visit to, 17.
Storey, M., on Brooks-Sumner episode, 143–144; view of Sumner-Douglas debate, 234.
Stowe, Mrs., view of Douglas, 132.
Stuart, John F., contest with Douglas, 38.
Sumner, Charles, relation to Douglas, 129; controversy with Douglas, 142; attacked by Brooks, 142; seeks to amend Nebraska bill, 194; asks delay on Nebraska bill, 195; prepares protest against

Nebraska bill, 199; debate with Douglas, 234.
Sumter, relief attempted, 332; Douglas's view on, 339; attacked, 343.
Supreme Court (State), reorganized, 43; Douglas's relation to, 44; Douglas appointed to, 45; assigned to fifth district, 45; composition of, 44–45; Douglas's decisions as judge of, 45–46; his life as judge of, 47–48; modest equipment of, 48.
Supreme Court (Federal), Dred Scott decision of, 237.

TAMMANY, attitude of toward Douglas, 316–317.
Tariff, Douglas's attitude on, 126; of 1857 changed by Douglas, 126; discussion retarded by slavery debate, 299.
Taylor, Zachary, vote for, 105; relation to territorial question, 160.
"Ten Regiments Bill," speech of Douglas on, 96.
Territorial question, development of, 148.
Terry, controversy with Broderick in California, 303.
Texas, question of in relation to Mexico, 91; war concerning breaks out, 92; right to enter Union, Douglas's view of, 93.
Tonnage tax, for rivers and harbors urged by Douglas, 125.
Toombs, Robert, offers bill for admission of Kansas, 231; passed by Senate, 235; later history of, 236.
Trumbull, Lyman, before Supreme Court, 47; hostile to Douglas, 212; elected senator, 215; hated by Douglas, 217; debate with Douglas, 230; attacked by Douglas, 281.

UTAH, bill to organize passed in Senate, 161.

VAN BUREN, Douglas's work for, 41; attitude toward Mormons, 54; vote for, 105.
Villard, H., impressions of Mrs. Douglas, 138; spectator at Lincoln-Douglas debate, 265; view of Lincoln, 267.

WALKER, R. J., named Governor of Kansas, 239; hostile to Lecompton plan, 242.
Walker, Cyrus, Whig candidate in Mormon district, 62; on power of Mormon court, 62.
Walters, account of Douglas-Jackson interview, 75.
Webster, Daniel, relation to Douglas, 129; last service of, 149; answers Clay and Calhoun, 154; concedes existence of Southern grievance, 156; accepts Mason's bill, 156.
West, relation to Douglas's ambition, 167; favors Clayton-Bulwer treaty, 181.
Winchester, Douglas's school in, 20.
Winthrop, R. C., defeated for Speaker, 152.
Whigs, opposed by Douglas, 23; attacked by Douglas before Supreme Court, 40; election contest in Congress, 76.

YOUNG, Douglas's effort to undermine, 50.

DISCARDED